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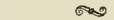

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THE CANADIAN WAR OF 1812

BY

C. P. LUCAS, C.B.

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PREFACE

THIS book, intended to be an instalment of Canadian history, has been compiled as far as possible simply from the dispatches on both sides relating to the war. Nearly all of them will be found printed in one or other of the following books:—The *Annual Register*; the Appendices to James's *Naval* and *Military Occurrences* of the war; Brannan's *Official Letters of the Military and Naval Officers of the United States during the Wars with Great Britain in the Years* 1812 *to* 1815, Washington City, 1823; and the *Documentary History of the Campaigns upon the Niagara Frontier*, collected and edited for the Lundy's Lane Historical Society, by Lieut.-Col. E. Cruikshank, to whom students of the war owe a debt of gratitude. The different printed versions of the dispatches in these books do not always quite tally with each other. Among other Canadian books I have consulted Mr. Brymner's *Reports on Canadian Archives*; the second volume of Christie's *History of the late Province of Lower Canada*, 1849; Professor Hannay's *History of the War of* 1812; and the eighth volume of Kingsford's *History of Canada*. Six out of the eight maps which accompany the letterpress are cotemporary American maps, which the Delegates of the Clarendon Press have been good enough to reproduce. They are from a little volume in the Colonial Office Library, entitled *Military and Topographical Atlas of the United States including the British Possessions and Florida*, &c., by John Melish, Philadelphia, 1813. I wish to express my warm acknowledgments to Mr. C. Atchley, I.S.O., Librarian of the Colonial Office, for constant and kindly help given to me in this as in other books.

C. P. LUCAS.

MAY, 1906.

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THE WAR OF 1812

CHAPTER I

1812

Causes of the war of 1812.

LONG before the war of 1812 between Great Britain and the United States of America broke out, the causes which more directly led to it were at work. The first cause was interference with the carrying trade of neutral Powers by declaration of blockade on the part of belligerents. This system reached its climax when Napoleon after the battle of Jena issued in 1806 the Berlin Decree, and Great Britain replied with the Orders in Council of 1807. The second cause was the right of search for deserters who had taken refuge or service on neutral vessels, which right was continuously and strenuously exercised by British admirals and captains. The third, and perhaps the main, cause — a complement of the second — was the impressment of sailors, whereby it was asserted that American citizens were constantly forced to serve on British ships.

The *Leopard* and the *Chesapeake*.

The second and third grounds of complaint were illustrated by the incident of the *Leopard* and the *Chesapeake* in June, 1807. Deserters from a British ship of war had taken service on an American frigate, the *Chesapeake*. The latter was followed out to sea by the British ship *Leopard*, whose captain was acting under the direct orders of the British admiral at Halifax, Vice-Admiral Berkeley. The commander of the *Chesapeake* having demurred to the right of search, the *Leopard* fired on the American ship, killing and wounding some of the crew, and carrying off four prisoners, three of whom were subsequently claimed by the Americans as citizens of the United States. It was a high-handed proceeding, and, occurring as it did at a time of great political tension, it caused much bitterness and excitement in America. The

British government, it is true, recalled the admiral and disavowed the action which had been taken under his instructions; but the incident brought up the whole question of the right of search, and over four years passed before the American government accepted the reparation which had been offered. At length the Prince Regent's speech at the opening of Parliament on January 7, 1812, the year in which war with the United States actually began, intimated that 'while His Royal Highness regrets that various important subjects of difference with the government of the United States of America still remain unadjusted, the difficulties which the affair of the *Chesapeake* frigate has occasioned have been finally removed'.

Canadian militia called out.

The immediate result of the action of the *Leopard* was much talk in the United States of invading Canada. To this the acting Lieutenant-Governor of Lower Canada replied by calling out the Canadian militia; and the enthusiastic readiness with which the Canadians answered to the order had for the moment—but for the moment only—the effect of dispelling the belief which was widely spread among the Americans, that an invasion of Canada would be a procession through a country in sympathy with the invaders.

There was a good soldier at this time commanding the garrison at Quebec, Colonel Isaac Brock, soon to make his name in Canadian story; and, about four months after the collision between the two ships had taken place, on October 18, 1807, a new Governor-General of the two Canadas, Sir James Craig, landed at Quebec. Craig governed Canada for nearly four years, leaving under stress of ill health in June, 1811. He was a soldier of high repute. In his younger days he had fought through the American War of Independence, and in later life he had held commands and gained distinction in various parts of the world. Accustomed to order and to be obeyed, he came into collision with the elected Assembly in Lower Canada, and his peremptory and masterful

methods were not to the minds of the French Canadians. But his military reputation was no small asset to Canada. Correct in his attitude to the United States, giving no encouragement to the Indians as against the Americans, he was at the same time fearless and outspoken. In opening the session of the Legislature at Quebec in January, 1810, he spoke of the danger of war from 'the high-sounded resentment of America', and added an assurance that in the event of hostilities Canada would receive 'the necessary support of regular troops in the confident expectation of a cheerful exertion of the interior force of the country'. It was good for Canada in these troubled years to have a firm, strong soldier for her ruler, whose experience and ability, as the Americans must have known, had been well tried in war.

Henry's mission and correspondence.

At the beginning of the year 1809 Craig engaged John Henry, an Irish adventurer, who was then living at Montreal, on a confidential mission to the New England states, to ascertain the feeling in that part of the American Republic towards Great Britain, and the probabilities of war. Henry, who had connexions in the United States and had lived there at one time, had made the acquaintance of Ryland, the Governor-General's secretary, and while visiting Vermont and Massachusetts in the previous year, had corresponded with Ryland on the state of political feeling in the Republic. In March, 1809, Madison succeeded Jefferson as President, and it was of much importance to obtain first-hand and trustworthy information as to the political outlook. Henry wrote various secret and confidential letters, and expected as the result of his mission to be given some post under government. He went to England to urge his claims and, being disappointed, sold copies of his correspondence to Madison, who brought it before Congress at the beginning of the year 1812. The publication of the letters, though they were of no great importance, tended to further embitter the minds of the Americans against the English.

The old causes of dispute between the two nations, in

spite of constant negotiations into the intricacies of which it is not necessary to enter, had not been removed. In May, 1811, there had been another collision between a British and an American ship, the *Little Belt* and the *President*, both being ships of war, and either party contending that the other had fired the first shot. Eventually the American government took its stand on the ground that, while Napoleon had as from November 1, 1810, revoked the Berlin and Milan decrees, the British Orders in Council, which bore so hardly on neutral shipping, had not been withdrawn. The British government contended that the French decrees were still in force; but Madison and his advisers would not admit the validity of their arguments. In November, 1811, the President called together Congress in special session to consider the situation. On the following first of June he sent a message to Congress specifying as grounds for war against Great Britain the non-revocation of the Orders in Council, interference with American trade, practical blockade of American ports, impressment of American seamen, and instigation of Indian hostilities against the United States. The war party in Congress, too strong for the representatives of the northern states, carried an Act declaring war against Great Britain, and on June 19, 1812, Madison issued a formal Proclamation, announcing to the world that a state of war existed between the two countries. Four days later, on June 23, the British government withdrew the Orders in Council, too late to avert war.

The *Little Belt* and the *President*.

War declared by President Madison, June 19, 1812.

Critical position of Great Britain in 1812.

The year 1812 was one of the most critical years in all the history of Great Britain. The insanity of King George III had in the previous year made a Regency necessary. In the spring of 1812 the Prime Minister, Percival, was assassinated, and was succeeded by Lord Liverpool. In the Peninsula Wellington was making way against the French, for in 1812 Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz were stormed and the battle of Salamanca was won. On the other hand, the year 1812 was the year

when Napoleon invaded Russia in all the plenitude of his strength. On June 23 the vanguard of the great French army crossed the Niemen into Lithuania, and the winter, with the retreat from Moscow, was yet to come. A terrible burden was laid upon the eighteen millions who formed the population of the United Kingdom. Year after year of war had strained the resources of the nation almost to breaking point, and the end was not yet in sight. The last thing that the British people or the British government desired was an additional foe to fight, especially an enemy so formidable as the United States of America were even in these early days of their history. The census of 1810 credited the Republic with a population of 7¼ millions, including nearly 1¼ million of slaves.[1] Over 400,000 square miles were now under settlement: almost the whole of the Ohio valley was occupied, and Ohio had, in 1803, been admitted as a state into the Union. Already, before the eighteenth century ended, Kentucky and Tennessee had been admitted, and in 1812, the year in which war was declared, Louisiana was constituted a state of the Union. There are no accurate statistics of the population of British North America at this time. In 1807 the population of Nova Scotia was estimated at 65,000. In 1811 the estimate for Upper Canada was 77,000. In 1814 the estimate for Upper Canada was 95,000, and for Lower Canada 335,000. It may be taken that in 1812 British North America had hardly more than half a million inhabitants of European descent, against six millions of white residents in the United States.

Population and resources of the United States in 1812.

Population of British North America.

At the beginning of the war the American General Hull, in a proclamation which he issued after crossing on to Canadian soil over against Detroit, spoke of Canada as 'separated by an immense ocean and an extensive wilderness from Great Britain'. These words were not

Remoteness of Upper Canada from Great Britain.

[1] President Madison, in his speech on taking the oath of office for this second term, March 4, 1813, said, 'Our nation is, in number, more than half that of the British Isles.'—*Annual Register* for 1813, p. 395.

an inapt description of the realities of the case. The 'immense ocean' was then, as ever, Britain's highway, but it was a highway that could be kept open only by strength, efficiency, and vigilance. Under the stress of war with Napoleon, British ships were wanted in all parts of the world; and, anxious as the King's government was to avoid any semblance of menace to the United States, the naval forces in the North American seas, whose head quarters were at Halifax, had not been sufficiently strengthened, before hostilities actually began, to give assured preponderance over American vessels.

Decline of the British Navy.

Moreover, the British navy had deteriorated since Trafalgar, the officers had become over-confident, and sufficient attention had not been paid to gunnery practice.

Excellence of the American frigates.

The American frigates, on the other hand, though few in number, proved to be far stronger and more effective than had been anticipated by the British Admiralty, while the ports and creeks of New England had bred, for generations past, a race of good seamen skilled in privateering enterprise. Moreover, the security of Canada as a British possession depended not only on command of the sea, but also on command of the inland waters of the Upper St. Lawrence and Lakes Ontario and Erie.

The importance of commanding the inland waters not sufficiently recognized by the British government.

The events of the war were to prove that this fact had not been sufficiently appreciated by the British government, and from want of an adequate naval force on the lakes came most of the disasters which befell Canada in the war. Writing to Lord Bathurst on February 22, 1814, after the destruction of the British flotilla on Lake Erie, the Duke of Wellington said, 'I believe that the defence of Canada and the co-operation of the Indians depends upon the navigation of the lakes; and I see that both Sir G. Prevost and Commodore Barclay complain of the want of the crews of two sloops of war. Any offensive operation founded upon Canada must be preceded by the establishment of a naval superiority on the lakes. . . . In such countries as America, very extensive, thinly peopled, and producing but little food in proportion to

their extent, military operations by large bodies are impracticable, unless the party carrying them on has the uninterrupted use of a navigable river or very extensive means of land transport, which such a country can rarely supply.'[1]

In previous wars Canada had meant Lower Canada. Invasion, defence or conquest of Canada had meant invasion, defence or conquest of Montreal and Quebec, with the intervening settlements on the St. Lawrence. Lake Ontario had been included in the area of operations, but little more than incidentally, as a starting point for expeditions through the Mohawk country against Albany and New York, or down the St. Lawrence against Montreal. There were important outposts at Kingston, once Cataraqui and the site of Fort Frontenac, at Oswego, at Niagara, and further afield still, on Lake Erie, at Detroit, at Michillimackinac; but they were outposts only, outside the main zone of war. All this had been changed by the colonization of Upper Canada. Quebec was never even threatened in the later war; Montreal was threatened only, it was never attacked. There was fighting on the old line of invasion, on Lake Champlain, and between the northern end of the lake and the St. Lawrence over against Montreal; but with this exception, the war, so far as Canada was concerned, was almost entirely confined to Upper Canada, to the Upper St. Lawrence above Montreal, the shores of Lakes Ontario and Erie, and the Straits of Detroit; the Niagara river between Ontario and Erie being the central point in the fighting.

The main scene of the war was Upper Canada.

But for the water communication—and the waterways, as already stated, were insufficiently safeguarded—the settled part of Upper Canada, the peninsula of Ontario, was separated from the 'immense ocean' by an 'extensive wilderness'. Among the feats of the war it is recounted how, in February and March, 1813, the 104th or New Brunswick regiment made a winter march from Fredericton to Quebec in a little under four weeks, on

Distance of and difficulty of communication with Upper Canada.

[1] *Wellington's Dispatches* (Gurwood), 1838 ed., vol. ii, p. 525.

its way to Upper Canada ; and how, exactly a year later, under Major Evans's guidance, the second battalion of the 8th regiment with a detachment of sailors was successfully brought through by the same route. When after the war in April, 1815, Sir George Prevost left Quebec for England, he travelled overland to St. John, New Brunswick ; and his death in the following January was attributed in part to the fatigue of journeying on foot in time of snow through the uninhabited country between the St. Lawrence and the St. John river.[1] From Quebec to Upper Canada there were many miles to be covered by land or by water, and in Upper Canada itself the settlements were few, and the intervening distances were long. The difficulties which Lord Wolseley encountered and surmounted in connexion with the transport of men and supplies from Ontario to Fort Garry, now Winnipeg, on the Red River expedition of 1870, in a lesser degree in 1812 beset the movement of troops from the Atlantic coast to the further end of Lake Erie.[2]

In a book on the war, published in 1818, the distance from Quebec to Amherstburg by the nearest route is given at 1,207 miles.[3] Amherstburg was a Canadian

[1] *Christie's History of the Late Province of Lower Canada*, 1849, vol. ii, p. 245.

[2] 'One great peculiarity of our undertaking struck me forcibly at the time: that in an age, justly celebrated for its inventions and scientific progress, such a military expedition should start unaided in any fashion by either the steam engine or the electric telegraph. We were to depend exclusively upon sail and oar to reach our far-off destination, just as the Greeks and Romans had been forced to do in their foreign campaigns some twenty centuries before. Another curious fact was, that upon reaching our destination we should be as far from a telegraph station as Caesar was from Rome when he jumped ashore in Kent with his legions a little before the Christian era.' —Lord Wolseley's *Story of a Soldier's Life*, 1903, vol. ii, pp. 194–5.

[3] *A full and correct account of the military occurrences of the late war between Great Britain and the United States of America*, London, 1818, by William James, vol. i, p. 49. This book was an answer to publications on the war written on the American side, and its style resembles that of the rival editors in *Pickwick*. James had been a prisoner in the United States at the beginning of the war and had a violent animus against the Americans. He had already written *A full and correct*

settlement near the outlet of the Detroit river into Lake Erie, and here a small British garrison was stationed. The distance must have been exaggerated, but there were at least 800 to 900 miles of frontier between Quebec and the western end of Lake Erie exposed to American invasion. Further away again than Amherstburg, on St. Joseph's Island, at the lower end of the strait from Lake Superior into Lake Huron, there was another British outpost, within striking distance of the American station at Michillimackinac, at the entrance of Lake Michigan. To watch this long frontier, and to hold the posts from 250 miles below Quebec to St. Joseph's Island, there were, we are told, at first [1] but 4,450 British regulars in the two Canadas, including four regiments of the line, the 8th, the 41st, the 49th, and the 100th.[2] The 8th, now the King's (Liverpool) regiment, whose flag carries 'Niagara', was known in 1812 as the King's regiment of foot. It had already seen much service in Canada, having been sent out there in 1768. In 1773 detachments of the regiment had been placed in garrison at Niagara, Detroit, and other western stations; and, speaking generally, during the War of Independence the soldiers of the 8th were employed in what was then the Far West. In 1776 a small party of men from this regiment, under Captain Forster, with Canadian and Indian auxiliaries, descending from Ogdensburg towards Montreal, made a successful raid on the Cedars; and in 1777 another detachment served under St. Leger on the abortive expedition which attempted to force its way from Oswego to Albany by the line of the Mohawk river, in co-opera-

The length of the Canadian frontier.

Its scanty garrison.

The British troops of the line in Canada at the beginning of the war.

The 8th regiment.

account of the chief naval occurrences in the war, and he subsequently wrote the well-known *Naval History of Great Britain*.

[1] James, vol. i, p. 55.

[2] The present 100th regiment, the Leinsters, which has for one of its titles 'The Royal Canadians', and bears 'Niagara' on its flag, was raised in Canada in 1858, at the time of the Indian Mutiny, under the title of 'The Prince of Wales' Royal Canadian Regiment of Foot'. It is the heir of the 100th 'Prince Regent's County of Dublin' regiment which was raised in 1805, served in the war of 1812, and was disbanded as the 99th in 1818.

tion with the main advance of the British army under Burgoyne. After the American war was over, in 1785, the regiment left Canada. It took part in the expedition to Egypt and the battle of Alexandria, being then commanded by Gordon Drummond, under whose leadership it came again in the later part of the war of 1812, when Drummond was in command of all the forces in Upper Canada. From 1804 to 1815 a second battalion was added to the regiment. In 1808 the first battalion was again sent out to British North America, but to Nova Scotia, not to Canada, and was almost immediately sent on to the West Indies, for the taking of Martinique, being in this expedition associated with Sir George Prevost, then Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia, and subsequently at the time of the war of 1812 Governor-General of Canada. Prevost was in charge of the North American contingent for the Martinique expedition, and second in command of the whole force. The first battalion returned to Halifax in 1809, went to Quebec in 1810, and served through the whole war which followed. Meanwhile six companies of the second battalion were sent out to Halifax in 1810, and, as already stated, were marched up early in 1814 through the forest into Canada.

Associated with Gordon Drummond and Prevost.

The 41st regiment.

The 41st, the Welsh Regiment, saw more fighting than any other regiment at the beginning of the war, and as much as any other throughout the war. 'The 41st is an uncommonly fine regiment, but wretchedly officered,' wrote Brock, in September, 1812, having had it under his eye partly at Detroit, partly on the Niagara frontier. Four names recalling the war are on its flag—Detroit, Queenstown, Miami, and Niagara. The 49th, now the Berkshire regiment, was Brock's own regiment. He had commanded it under Sir John Moore in North Holland, and in 1801, on board the fleet at the battle of Copenhagen, with Hyde Parker and Nelson. Right well the regiment fought on the Niagara frontier, notably at the battle of Queenstown, or Queenston, which name is on its flag. In the letter just quoted, Brock, who was then at Fort

The 49th.

George, wrote: 'Six companies of the 49th are with me here, and the remaining four at Kingston, under Vincent. Although the regiment has been ten years in this country, drinking rum without bounds, it is still respectable, and apparently ardent for an opportunity to acquire distinction.'

These four regiments of the line, including the 100th regiment, together with a small body of artillery, were supplemented by a few other local troops which were classed as regulars, such as the Canadian Fencibles, the Canadian Voltigeurs, raised just as the war was about to begin, the Royal Newfoundland regiment, the 104th or New Brunswick regiment, the Royal Veteran battalion, and the Glengarry Light Infantry. The Glengarry Light Infantry deserves special mention. After the conclusion of the War of Independence, in the year 1784, the commander of a Loyalist regiment in that war applied to General Haldimand on behalf of 'the Highlanders and others of my regiment of the Roman Catholic and Protestant persuasions . . . to indulge them to settle in separate bodies for the benefit of their religion'. The application was granted, and the Roman Catholic, Gaelic-speaking Highlanders, described as having been before the war 'inhabitants of the back settlements of the province of New York', were given lands in what is still known as Glengarry county in the province of Ontario, touching the St. Lawrence at Lake St. Francis, and on the frontier of Lower Canada. There a Mr. Roderick Macdonell, in 1785, received permission to join them as their priest. In the year 1791 a number of Roman Catholic Highlanders in the old country who, we read, were turned out of their homes in the Highlands in consequence of the system of converting 'small farms into large sheepwalks', were about to emigrate to the United States when they were induced by their priest, Alexander Macdonell, to settle in and near Glasgow, where he went to live among them at great personal risk, for the No Popery spirit was strong at the time, and according to

The Glengarrys.

Alexander Macdonell.

his own account, written many years afterwards, 'no clergyman of his persuasion had hardly ventured to stay one night in that town since the mobs of 1780[1]'—a reference to the time of the Lord George Gordon riots. In or about the year 1794, when war had broken out between revolutionary France and Great Britain, Alexander Macdonell, on behalf of his flock, offered to the Government that they should be embodied into a regiment to serve in any part of the British dominions, a rare offer for a body of Scotch Roman Catholics in the eighteenth century. The proposal was accepted, and a Roman Catholic regiment of Glengarry Fencibles was embodied for service in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, and Ireland. The regiment served in Brock's native island of Guernsey, and in Ireland during the Irish Rebellion, where, with Alexander Macdonell as their chaplain and another Macdonell as their colonel, they did excellent service, combining marked loyalty to the Government with considerate treatment of their co-religionists whose rebellion they were assisting to quell. After the peace of Amiens the regiment was disbanded, and in March, 1803, the Secretary of State wrote to General Hunter, then Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, that they were anxious to emigrate in a body to Canada, under the guidance of their faithful chaplain, and join their relations already settled in the province. They were described in this dispatch as 'a body of Highlanders, mostly Macdonells, and partly disbanded soldiers of the late Glengarry Fencible regiment, with their families and connexions'; and, in view of 'the merit and services of the regiment', they were warmly commended to Hunter, who was instructed to allot them Crown lands, 1,200 acres to Alexander Macdonell, and 200 acres to every family whom he introduced. A year later, in April, 1804, the Secretary of State wrote again to the effect that circum-

[1] See *The Canadian Archives* for 1896, Note C, 'The Roman Catholic Church in Upper Canada,' especially pp. 86–7. See also the preceding Note B, 'Anticipation of the war of 1812'.

stances prevented the disbanded soldiers from going out in a body, but that Alexander Macdonell himself intended to emigrate, and he commended him to General Hunter. The latter answered that he would pay Macdonell every attention on arrival, and would have been glad to see the old soldiers of the Glengarry regiment settled in Upper Canada, for they had served under himself for a short time in Ireland, in 1798, and he had found them 'a remarkably well-behaved, well-disposed set of people'. The outcome was that, if the regiment as a whole did not emigrate, a large proportion at any rate followed Alexander Macdonell to Canada and there settled with their kinsfolk in the Glengarry district—a body of loyal Scotch Roman Catholics, on the frontier of Roman Catholic and French Canada, no small recommendation in the eyes of Isaac Brock, who before the war of 1812 had, like Sir James Craig, no belief in the loyalty of the French Canadians. The next that we hear of the Glengarry settlers is a proposal made by John Macdonell, lieutenant of the county of Glengarry, and described by Brock as 'Lieutenant-Colonel John McDonald, late of the Royal Canadian Volunteers', for raising 'a corps of Highland Fencible Infantry in the county of Glengarry, Upper Canada'. This was in January, 1807, and an integral part of the scheme was to be the appointment of Alexander Macdonell as chaplain of the regiment, on account of his great influence with the men. Brock warmly supported the proposal, but the Imperial government negatived it for the time, as being one of various similar offers which had either proved or promised to be abortive. A year later, in April, 1808, Sir James Craig wrote home saying that, in view of the imminence of war with the United States, he had accepted the offer which the Secretary of State had put into his hands from the inhabitants of Glengarry county, 'to raise a corps of Fencible men for these colonies of five hundred rank and file.' This would appear to have been the offer made in the preceding year, which the Imperial govern-

ment had refused; and their attitude was justified, for at the end of May, Craig wrote again saying that the zeal of the Glengarry settlers was greater than their ability, that it was found impossible to raise the proposed number in a reasonable time, and that therefore he had cancelled the scheme. Nothing further was done in the matter till the years 1811–12. Eventually, in March, 1812, Sir George Prevost, Craig's successor, wrote to Lord Liverpool that in view of the state of public affairs he had, without waiting for the King's commands, issued a warrant for raising a corps of Light Infantry from among the Glengarry settlers, that he wished to allot land to those who enlisted, and that he had prohibited the enrolment of Canadians or Americans who had lately come in from the United States. Towards the end of May he wrote again, that the promise of a grant of land had proved a great incentive to enlistment, and that the regiment was now complete, the number being four hundred, and the head quarters Three Rivers. Yet again he wrote in July, that in view of the strong indications of war he had authorized the strength of the regiment to be raised to six hundred, and recruits to be admitted from other districts besides Glengarry. His dispatch was crossed by one from the Home government, also written in July, and expressing a hope that the arrangements for raising the regiment might be abandoned, and that Prevost would find himself able safely to suspend all extraordinary preparations for defence; but, when August came, another dispatch was written, giving the Prince Regent's sanction to raising the corps, the maximum number to be eight hundred, and land to be granted to each man when the regiment should be disbanded. Thus formed, the Glengarry Light Infantry served with distinction till the end of the war, Alexander Macdonell, whose influence had largely created the new regiment, still serving with them as their chaplain and guide, and sharing their toils and privations in the field. He himself, in later years, became the first Roman Catholic Bishop of Upper Canada, deservedly honoured

for his singular loyalty and patriotism; and the name of one Macdonell after another recurs in the annals of Upper Canada at this troubled time, one after another doing good service for the land of their adoption.

By the side of this handful of regular soldiers, the Canadian militia, and such Indians as were already in a chronic state of war with the United States, ranged themselves for the defence of Canada. The fact that Upper Canada was the main theatre of war and invasion meant that the Americans were faced by men who, above all others in the whole world, were most likely to offer a stubborn resistance, viz. the United Empire Loyalists. Hull's proclamation, to which reference has already been made, and which was only a sample of the bombastic proclamations which were freely issued on either side during the war, informed the Canadians that by joining the United States they would be 'emancipated from tyranny and oppression, and restored to the dignified station of freemen'. Brock, in his counter-proclamation, reminded the men whom Hull wished to detach from their British allegiance, that it was not thirty years since Upper Canada had been settled 'by a band of veterans exiled from their former possessions on account of their loyalty'. The Americans were, in fact, now to reap the harvest which they themselves had sown. Their treatment of the Loyalists had been at once unjust and ungenerous. It had converted them into the bitterest and most determined foes; and, with the record of the past still fresh in the minds of men, to offer freedom from oppression to the United Empire Loyalists of Upper Canada, while invading their country, was simply to add insult to injury.

The United Empire Loyalists.

But the settlers in Upper Canada were not all of the Loyalist stock. In January, 1808, Gore, Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, reported to Craig that 'the generality of the inhabitants from Kingston to the borders of the lower province may be depended upon', but that he was not equally sure of the loyalty of the residents

American settlers and Canadian renegades in Upper Canada.

further west, round York, on the Niagara frontier, and on Lake Erie. 'Excepting the inhabitants of Glengarry,' he continued, 'and those persons who have served in the American War, and their descendants, which form a considerable body of men, the residue of the inhabitants of this colony consist chiefly of persons who have emigrated from the States of America, and of consequence retain those ideas of equality and insubordination, much to the prejudice of this Government, so prevalent in that country.'[1] A number of Americans had come over the border into Ontario and taken up farms, as they had done also in the eastern townships of Lower Canada. Their sympathies were naturally with the United States, and by their side were men of more directly traitorous type, such as Willcocks, who had been a prominent opponent of the Government and who was subsequently killed fighting against Canada in the American ranks. At the beginning of the war Willcocks and his associates in the Legislature of Upper Canada defeated Brock's efforts to pass a supplementary Militia Bill, and to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act; and in the later stages of the war American raids into Canada were aided and abetted by sympathizers living on Canadian soil.

Brock's proclamation to the citizens of Upper Canada.

There were no French Canadians in Upper Canada except a few who lived over against Detroit on the Canadian side of the river, or who had come across from Detroit when war broke out; and Brock's proclamation to the inhabitants of Upper Canada, issued in reply to Hull's manifesto, was essentially the address of an Englishman to Englishmen, warning the Loyalists of the province against the possibility of annexation by France. The proclamation ran: 'It is but too obvious that once exchanged from the powerful protection of the United Kingdom you must be re-annexed to the dominion of France. . .; this restitution of Canada to the empire of France was the stipulated reward for the aid afforded to the revolted colonies, now the United States;

[1] Report on *Canadian Archives* for 1896, Note B, p. 35.

the debt is still due, and there can be no doubt but the pledge was renewed as a consideration for commercial advantages, or rather for an expected relaxation in the tyranny of France over the commercial world.' There was not the slightest danger that the United States, if they conquered Canada, would give it back to France; and the war was to show, if evidence were needed, that no bait of the kind was likely to induce French Canadians to favour a preliminary conquest by the United States; but Brock's words show what was the feeling of the time, and how in Upper Canada resistance to American invasion was identified with the world-wide struggle in which Great Britain was engaged against Napoleon. There was some reason at the moment for uneasiness with regard to the French Canadians, for when, on the declaration of war, the militia was embodied in the Montreal district, a serious riot took place at Lachine, which was only put down with the help of regular troops. On the other hand, the Quebec legislature showed itself to be at least as loyal as the Assembly of Upper Canada, and, while declining to take any steps to facilitate martial law, passed an act authorizing the issue of army bills to make good the want of ready money, and guaranteeing the interest on them and their ultimate redemption.

French Canadian feeling.

One considerable asset Canada had in the adhesion of a large number of fighting Indians, under the leadership of a notable man, Tecumseh. He was a Shawnee chief, one of the Western Indians who were being ever dispossessed of their lands by the backwoodsmen of the American Republic. He was one of three brothers, another of whom was a so-called prophet such as from time to time arise among native races. He had already fought hard for his people, and, in November, 1811, had taken a foremost part at the Battle of Tippecanoe, a tributary of the Wabash river, in what is now the state of Indiana, when the American General Harrison inflicted a decisive defeat upon the confederated Indians. When the war of 1812 broke out he was in the prime of manhood, having been

The Indian allies of Canada. Tecumseh.

born in 1769 or 1770, and he had the outward appearance as well as the qualities of a leader of men. He stands out in Indian history, with Pontiac and Joseph Brant, as one of the few red men who were more than savages. Like Pontiac, he had the conception of combining the various tribes in self-defence against the constant encroachments of the white men ; but his character was nobler than that of Pontiac, and, as far as was in his power, he checked the butchery which was the usual accompaniment of Indian war. He was a chivalrous enemy and a high-minded man. While Brock lived he was his fast friend, finding in him a kindred spirit ; and the one and the other met the brave man's death in the forefront of the battle.

Isaac Brock.

It was well for Canada, and well for England, that Isaac Brock had the keeping of Upper Canada in the early days of the war. Very fortunately he was not only in command of the troops, but also, after the Lieutenant-Governor, Gore, left for England in October, 1811, in charge of the civil government also. Brock, on a smaller scale, is the nearest approach to Wolfe in Canadian history, resembling him in chivalrous patriotism, in fearlessness which did not wait to count odds, in personal influence over the men he led, white men and coloured alike. Like Wolfe, though in a less degree, he had a short and brilliant career, being killed in his forty-fourth year ; and his death on the battlefield on Queenston Heights recalls the more memorable death on the Plains of Abraham. Either hero fell in a victorious fight ; but, less fortunate than Wolfe, Brock knew not when he died of the coming victory. He was like Wolfe, too, in that he was a well-trained soldier, having served his military apprenticeship carefully and well. The criticism passed upon him after death by a good soldier, his Brigade-Major at Fort George, Thomas Evans,[1] was that 'his high spirit would never descend to particulars', and that therefore

[1] Afterwards General Evans; an account of him is given in Kingsford's *History of Canada*, vol. viii, p. 239. For the above letter, which was dated Jan. 6, 1813, see *The Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier in* 1813 (Lundy's Lane Historical Society), Part I, 1813, p. 30.

under his command, details, which were none the less essential, were neglected. The same writer, however, while criticizing, bore witness that Brock's 'high personal merits stood recorded in almost every act of his valuable life'. Brock was born in Guernsey, in 1769; and he entered the army, when not yet sixteen, in 1785. At first in the 8th regiment, he afterwards exchanged into the 49th, which, as already stated, he commanded in Holland at the Battle of Egmont-op-Zee, and at the Battle of Copenhagen. He went out to Canada with his regiment in 1802, and with a short interval served there continuously till the day of his death. Two or three days before he fell, he was gazetted in London as a Knight of the Bath; and he is known as Sir Isaac Brock, though he never bore the honour in his lifetime. A memorial at the public expense was set up to his memory in the southern transept of St. Paul's Cathedral, the inscription on which runs as follows: 'Erected at the Public Expense To the Memory of Major-General Sir Isaac Brock Who gloriously fell on the 13th of October MDCCCXII in resisting an attack on Queenstown, Upper Canada'; and a stately monument marks the scene of his death on Queenston Heights.[1]

Of a widely different type was the other leading figure in Canada in the year 1812. The Governor-General, Sir George Prevost, had reached Quebec from Halifax, and entered on his office on September 14, 1811. He was born in New Jersey, where his father was then stationed, in 1767, a son of the general who, after being wounded at Fontenoy and serving under Wolfe in 1759, subsequently in the War of Independence held Savannah against a combined attack of French and Americans under D'Estaing and Lincoln. The elder Prevost was a Swiss, a native of

Sir George Prevost.

[1] The original monument, erected in pursuance of an act of the Legislature of Upper Canada passed in 1815, was blown up by an Irish American on Good Friday, 1840, and Charles Dickens in his *American Notes*, to which reference is made in the account of Brock in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, mentions its dilapidated condition when he visited the place. A great public meeting was held on the spot in 1841, and the outcome was the present fine monument.

Geneva, and like others of his countrymen had entered the British service as an officer of the Royal Americans. In 1765, he married at Lausanne Mademoiselle Grand of that town, whose family were friends of Gibbon,[1] and who became the mother of the Governor-General of Canada. The younger Prevost was therefore entirely of Swiss parentage. His first commission was in the 60th, the Royal Americans, he was promoted into the 28th regiment, and subsequently went back to the 60th. His active military service before the war of 1812 was almost entirely in the West Indies. There he served with distinction in the years 1795–6, especially in the island of St. Vincent, where he commanded the troops and received an address from the Legislature. In 1798, he was appointed military commandant in St. Lucia, and, on the petition of the French inhabitants of that island, with whom he was very popular, was made civil governor of the island in May, 1801. In the following year, on Christmas Day, 1802, he was appointed Governor of Dominica, and for his successful defence of the island against the French in 1805, he was created a baronet. In December, 1808, he was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia, and in that year and in 1809, took part, as second in command, in the successful expedition against Martinique. He was held in high esteem in Nova Scotia, as he had been in the West Indies : and, when he became Governor-General of the Canadas, his conciliatory attitude, which presented a strong contrast to the high-handed downrightness of Sir James Craig, coupled with his knowledge of French communities and intimate knowledge of the French language, endeared him to the French Canadians, who retained their liking and esteem for him to the end. He was beyond question a man of high character and attainments, one of those who do excellent work under ordinary circumstances or in minor positions, but who in times of exceptional diffi-

[1] 'Let me tell you a piece of Lausanne news. Nannette Grand is married to Lt.-Col. Prevost.' Gibbon to Holroyd, Beriton, Oct. 31, 1765. Gibbon's *Miscellaneous Works*, 1814 ed., vol. ii, pp. 63-4.

culty and danger are not found equal to supreme responsibility. During the war he was lacking in nerve and resolution ; and, although he did good service by attaching to himself, and therefore in a measure to the government which he represented, French Canadian feeling, Canada, at this critical time, had better have been in the strong hands of Sir James Craig.

Prevost's popularity with the French Canadians.

In the first days of his government, however, Prevost's personal popularity at Quebec and his courtesy to the opponents of Sir James Craig, much criticized by Ryland and the adherents of the late governor, brought about a more amenable spirit in the Assembly ; an important result of which was that they passed in the spring of 1812 a useful Militia act, and voted liberal sums to cover the expenses connected with it. Under this act, at the end of May, immediately before the American declaration of war, four battalions of militia were embodied. Three years later, on the day of Prevost's departure from Quebec, April 3, 1815, an address presented to him by residents in that city stated that on his arrival the governor had found the majority of Canadians 'irritated by the unfortunate effects of misunderstandings of a long duration', but that he had 'soon allayed every discontent, and rallied the whole population for the common defence. Under the happy influence of harmony thus restored, the militia was assembled and trained, and an exhausted Treasury replenished'. This was a French Canadian view of a governor who conciliated and possibly courted French Canadians, but the statement was in the main a true presentation of the case. In judging Prevost, it must be further remembered that he served a government which was dragged with the utmost reluctance into war with the United States, and was ready to welcome any reasonable chance of peace. There was therefore a standing excuse for a not very resolute man to refuse to take strong measures, when the possibility of milder alternatives presented itself. Yet, when all has been said which can be said, one of the many difficulties which

Militia Act passed by the Legislature of Lower Canada.

Want of a strong governor in Canada.

Canada was called upon to surmount in these critical years, was the want of a leader of the type of Carleton, or even of Sir James Craig.

The United States were unprepared for the war and very vulnerable.

The Americans, in their turn, though their fighting strength was overwhelming compared with that of Canada, had no easy task on hand. If Canada was vulnerable, so also were the United States. If the wealth, resources, and population of the United States enormously exceeded those of Canada, in the same proportion the United States had more to lose. The burning of the public buildings at Washington was precisely the same in kind as the burning of the buildings at York or Newark, but it was different in degree. The war laid open the inland borders of the Republic to Indian raids, and it exposed the whole length of the populated Atlantic seaboard to attack by the first sea-power of the world. There was no adequate military organization; there was a want of trained soldiers and trained generals; the war was in its inception a war of offence not of defence, and the weakness of a confederation was not, as in the War of Independence, counteracted by the sense of fighting for freedom, for hearth and home. The nation in fact was divided against itself, and the New Englanders, who had been the most strenuous opponents of Great Britain in the War of Independence, from first to last had not their hearts in the later war. In 1808, John Henry wrote to Ryland that the people of Vermont were indignant at the Non-Intercourse act which had lately been passed by Congress; the feeling being that the interests of the northern states were not regarded in the councils of the nation; that the leading men in Boston were opposed to war with England; and that after a few more months of the non-intercourse policy the New England states would be ready to withdraw from the confederacy. In February, 1809, he wrote, 'there is good ground at present to hope that the states of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Vermont will resist every attempt of the French party to involve the United States in a war with Great

The American nation was divided in feeling with regard to the war.

The northern states strongly opposed the war.

Britain'; and, a little later, that New York had thrown in its lot with the northern states.[1]

The voting in Congress on the act which embodied the declaration of war told much the same tale. Every representative of South Carolina, both in the House of Representatives and in the Senate, voted for war; every representative of Connecticut in both houses voted against it. A very large majority of representatives in the lower House from Pennsylvania and Virginia voted for war; a majority from Massachusetts, and a large majority from New York, voted against it. The far southern states, where at the outset of the War of Independence the Loyalist party had been specially strong, were now most unanimous in favour of war with England. The northern and commercial states to whom Non-Intercourse acts without open war had brought disaster, were, with good reason, most opposed to it. On the same grounds, in the later as in the earlier war, the preponderating feeling in New York was, at any rate at first, in favour of peace with Great Britain.

The voting in Congress on the declaration of war.

On July 15, 1812, the month following the declaration of war, Prevost wrote to Lord Liverpool, 'In the present state of politics in the United States, I consider it prudent to avoid every measure which can have the least tendency to unite the people of America. Whilst discussion prevails among them, their attempts on the British American provinces will be feeble. It is therefore my wish to avoid committing any act which may even by a strained construction tend to unite the eastern and southern states, unless from its perpetration we are to derive an immediate, considerable, and important advantage.'

In the northern states opposition to the war was stimulated by antipathy to Napoleon and his system. Fifteen hundred inhabitants of the county of Rockingham in New Hampshire addressed a memorial to the President against the war, concluding their address with the fol-

The New England states strongly oppose any alliance with Napoleon.

[1] Henry's letters are printed in the *Report on the Canadian Archives for* 1896, Note B, Anticipation of the war of 1812.

lowing words: 'On the subject of any French connexion, whether close or more remote, we have made up our minds. We will, in no event, assist in uniting the Republic of America with the military despotism of France. We will have no connexion with her principles or her power. If her armed troops, under whatever name or character, should come here, we shall regard them as enemies.' After the war had begun, on September 17 and 18, 1812, a convention of delegates from thirty-four cities and counties of the state of New York was held to protest against it at Albany, hard by the head quarters of the American army. The delegates resolved 'that they contemplate with abhorrence even the possibility of an alliance with the present Emperor of France, every action of whose life has demonstrated that the attainment by any means of universal empire, and the consequent extinction of every vestige of freedom, are the sole objects of his incessant, unbounded, and remorseless ambition[1]'. On August 25, the General Assembly of the state of Connecticut in special session condemned the war, and resolved 'that we view with inexpressible concern the course of that destructive policy which leads to a connexion with the military despotism of France[2]'. War with England clearly involved the possibility of alliance with those who were warring with England. War with England, therefore, on this ground as on others, was repugnant to a large body of citizens in the freedom-loving northern states of the Union. At the beginning of the war, the flags were flown half-mast high in Boston harbour. Before it ended, delegates of the New England states had, in December, 1814, met at the Hartford Convention, meditating secession from the Union. In short, on the American side as on the British, it was a half-hearted war. The only party to it who were in the main quite heart-whole, fighting few against many in defence of their homes, were the people of Canada.

[1] *Annual Register for* 1812, p. 201.

[2] Quoted in Read's *Life and Times of Major-General Sir Isaac Brock, K.B.*, Toronto, 1894, p. 193.

The war opened with British successes. The first was in the far West. On learning that war had been declared, Brock sent instructions to the officer commanding the post on St. Joseph's Island, near to the Sault Ste Marie, giving him discretion to attack or defend as circumstances might dictate. The instructions were received on July 15, and the officer in question, Captain Roberts,[1] considering his post to be indefensible and hearing that large reinforcements were likely to reach the American garrison at Michillimackinac, determined immediately to attack that place, which was between forty-five and fifty miles distant. With the help of the agent of the Hudson's Bay Company, at ten o'clock on the following morning, the 16th, he embarked his small force consisting of some forty-five men of the 10th Battalion of Royal Veterans, about 180 Canadians, and some 400 Indians, together with two iron six-pounders. At three o'clock on the morning of the 17th he landed near the fort of Michillimackinac, and before ten o'clock had taken up a position completely commanding it. The garrison, which consisted only of sixty-one men in all, of whom fifty-seven were effectives, were then summoned to surrender; and at noon the capitulation was completed, and the fort with all that it contained passed into British possession.

The beginning of the war.

Michillimackinac taken by a small British force.

Not a shot had been fired. It was merely a case of a handful of men at a distant outpost having to surrender to a larger force which had them at their mercy; but the enterprise was of some importance, mainly because of the effect which it had upon the minds of the Indians. The first notable incident in the war had been a little expedition on the British side, bold, well-managed, and thoroughly successful. The result had been the capture of one of the historic points in the west, where for many generations

Effect of the British success upon the Indians.

[1] Captain Roberts's dispatch is given in Appendix I to Vol. I of James's *Military Occurrences*, p. 353. No. 3 in the same Appendix (p. 355) is the dispatch of the American commander, Lieutenant Hanks, which differs widely from the copy given at p. 34 of *Official Letters of the Military and Naval Officers of the United States during the War with Great Britain in the years* 1812–15, collected and arranged by John Brannan, Washington City, 1823.

Indians and white men had been wont to congregate. After his surrender at Detroit, General Hull, in his dispatch to the American Secretary at War, pleaded that the capture of Michillimackinac had led to a general rising of the Indians, who cut his communications and largely contributed to his misfortunes. 'After the surrender of Michillimackinac,' he wrote, 'almost every tribe and nation of Indians, excepting a part of the Miamis and Delawares, north from beyond Lake Superior, west from beyond the Mississippi, south from the Ohio and Wabash, and east from every part of Upper Canada and from all the intermediate country, joined in open hostility, under the British standard, against the army I commanded. . . . The surrender of Michillimackinac opened the northern hive of Indians, and they were swarming down in every direction.' Allowing for the fact that the writer was anxious to find excuses for the disaster which had befallen his army and himself, there is still no reason to doubt that this little initial success brought to the English and Canadians a number of Indian allies. Neither is there any reason to doubt that such incidents as the surrender of Michillimackinac were largely determined by dread, in case of resistance, of wholesale massacre at the hands of the Indians. In his dispatch reporting the capitulation, the American commander, Lieutenant Hanks, wrote that he took the step 'from the conviction that it was the only measure that could prevent a general massacre'; and the Americans published a corroborating letter from an Englishman who was in charge of some of the Indians who took part in the expedition, in which the statement was made, 'It was a fortunate circumstance the fort capitulated without firing a single gun, for had they done so, I firmly believe not a soul of them would have been saved.' As it was, not a hair of a head was touched, nor was there pillage of any kind. Cases occurred later in the war of massacres by Indians serving on the British side. On the other hand, it must be remembered that the Americans as well as the English employed

Dread of massacres by Indians.

Indians when they could enlist their services, and the greater readiness of the Indians to follow the English lead was evidence of the better treatment they had received in Canada than in the United States. Hull's proclamation gave no quarter even to any white man who might be taken prisoner, while fighting side by side with an Indian. Brock, in his counter-proclamation, laid down firmly and bravely the principle that the natives 'are men and have equal rights with all other men to defend themselves and their property when invaded, more especially when they find in the enemy's camp a ferocious and mortal foe using the same warfare which the American commander affects to reprobate'.

The American plan of campaign, at the beginning of the war, included invasion of Upper Canada at either end of Lake Erie. The Detroit river was to be crossed at the western end of the lake, the Niagara river at the north-eastern. The line of length of Lake Erie is from south-west to north-east; the Detroit river runs into the lake almost at right angles from north to south, and the Niagara river runs out of the lake, again almost at right angles, from south to north. The lake itself is about 250 miles in length, and some sixty miles wide at its broadest point. On the Canadian side there was, in 1812, no fort or naval dépôt between the mouth of the Detroit river and the entrance of the Niagara. On the American side, on the other hand, the stations of Presque Isle and Sandusky had already taken their place in history; and so had the Miami or Maumee river, flowing into the west end of the lake well within American territory. At what were known as the Miami rapids, about twelve miles up the river, as well as higher up, there had been forts already; and a new fort, christened Fort Meigs, in honour of the governor of Ohio at the time, was constructed at the rapids in the course of the war. The American naval station on the lake was at Presque Isle. Presque Isle had been in former days the starting-point and first fort on the route from Lake Erie to Fort Duquesne at the junction of the rivers which form

The American plan of campaign against Upper Canada.

Lake Erie.

Erie or Presque Isle.

the Ohio. The harbour was known as Presque Isle; the little town which was growing up upon it was called Erie; and here, defended by a battery and a blockhouse, the Americans, as the war went on, built and refitted the ships which eventually commanded the lake.

Geography of the Detroit frontier.

The Detroit river flows with a westerly course out of Lake St. Clair. At a point rather over twenty miles from Lake Erie, where the river makes a sharp curve to the south, on its western, the American side, stood the old French settlement of Detroit, founded in the first year of the eighteenth century by La Mothe Cadillac, and brought into prominence in the war with Pontiac. The French Canadians had settled on both sides of the river, and Detroit itself at this time contained some 800 inhabitants, protected by the fort which stood behind, not immediately on the bank of the river. The river is here half a mile wide or a little more; the present Canadian town of Windsor, which stands directly opposite Detroit, was not then in existence; but three miles lower down on the Canadian side was the small village of Sandwich. About sixteen miles below Sandwich, on the Canadian side, and within three miles of the outlet of the Detroit river into Lake Erie, was the rather larger village of Amherstburg, which was the principal British settlement in these parts and the nearest approach to a port and naval dépôt. On the northern side of Amherstburg was a very weak fortification known as Fort Malden, which was held by a few soldiers; and two or three miles to the north again the Sandwich road crossed a stream called the Rivière aux Canards. Over against Amherstburg, on the American side, was the village of Brownstown on the Huron river; and between the Huron river and the Maumee river was the Rivière au Raisin, running into the open lake with a settlement called Frenchtown upon it.

Geography of the Niagara frontier.

At the other end of Lake Erie, the waters of the lake are carried into Lake Ontario by the Niagara river, which has a length of thirty-six miles in all from lake to lake, twenty-two miles of the river being above the falls and

fourteen below. On the American shore of Lake Erie, just outside the entrance of the Niagara river, stands the city of Buffalo, which in 1812 was a village, and appears on the plan in James's *Military Occurrences* of the war as 'Buffaloe or New Amsterdam'. Rather over two miles to the north on the same side, standing on the Niagara river, was Black Rock, which, at the beginning of the war, if not before, was fortified and held as a military post. Here there was a ferry, the river having narrowed to the width of half a mile. On the opposite Canadian side, midway between Buffalo and Black Rock, was the British Fort Erie, immediately at the entrance of the river, which is here about a mile wide. Between nine and ten miles from the outlet from Lake Erie the Niagara is divided into two streams by Grand Island, nearly eight miles long and twenty-six square miles in area. Over against the northern end of the island, on the American shore, five miles above the falls, is the mouth of the Cayuga Creek, where La Salle in 1679 built and launched his ship *The Griffin*. On the same side, further to the north and further down stream, is Schlosser Landing, the site of old Fort Schlosser, two miles above the falls, where French and English alike had held a post in the eighteenth century, which by this time had been abandoned; and lower down again on the same side, only a mile above the falls, was the old French landing, the upper end of La Salle's first portage round the falls in the winter of 1678–9. On the Canadian side of the river, about two miles above the falls, was and is the village of Chippawa. Nearly seven miles below the falls, halfway between them and Lake Ontario, stand the villages of Queenston on the Canadian side of the river, Lewiston on the American. They stand at the end of the lower rapids; the river is here still less than 250 yards wide, with a swift current; and the heights overlooking the villages, on their southern side, are over 300 feet above the water. They are part of a transverse ridge running east and west, through which the river has cut its way. At Lewiston, at the beginning

of the war, were the head quarters of the American army on the Niagara frontier. Rather over six miles lower down, on the Canadian side, there was a British fort, Fort George, standing on the bank above the river, and covering a group of buildings by the water's edge, one of which was 'Navy Hall', the first head quarters of Simcoe, the first Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada. Rather less than a mile lower down again, on the same side, near where the river flows into Lake Ontario, was the village of Newark, now Niagara on the Lake, the first capital of Upper Canada. At the extreme point between the lake and the river, on the Canadian side, there had been an old fort, Fort Missassauga; but Fort Niagara, which played so great a part in Canadian history from the days of La Salle onwards, stood opposite Newark on the American side, near where the village of Youngstown now stands. When the war opened it was a strong post, well fortified and garrisoned.

It has been stated that Captain Roberts, at the far-off station on St. Joseph's Island, received Brock's instructions on July 15. The first news of the declaration of war, however, had reached him a week earlier. The act of Congress declaring war was approved by President Madison on June 18, and on the 19th he issued his proclamation.

News of the declaration of war received very early in Canada.

Through the prompt action of the friends of Great Britain at New York, or of American citizens who had commercial interests at stake, Sir George Prevost received the news at Quebec on June 24 or 25, and Brock received it at York on the 27th. On the 30th it reached the commander of the little British garrison at the fort at Amherstburg, and on July 8 it reached St. Joseph's Island. Information through the ordinary official channels was long delayed.

Hull's force on the Detroit frontier.

General Hull under the instructions of Dr. Eustis, the American Secretary of War, had, before May ended, taken command of the army intended to invade Canada on the Detroit frontier. It consisted of militia and volunteers from Ohio and Michigan, together with one regiment of regular troops. He was moving forward from the Maumee

Map of the DETROIT FRONTIER.

Scale, 1:760,000

English Miles

0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16

To face page 31.

Emery Walker sc.

river towards Detroit, when he heard, on July 2, that war had been definitely declared; and on the same day a schooner, which was bringing by water from the Miami rapids to Detroit baggage and stores for his force, together with important information as to its numbers and the plan of campaign, was intercepted off Amherstburg and fell into British hands. On July 5 Hull reached Detroit with some 2,500 men. After bombarding the village of Sandwich, where the British were beginning to construct a battery, he crossed the river on the night of July 11, and, occupying Sandwich from which the British troops had retired, on the 12th issued his proclamation to the Canadians, to which reference has already been made. The whole British force on the Detroit frontier at the time consisted of a small detachment of artillery, 100 men of the 41st regiment, 300 of the Canadian militia, and about 150 Indians led by Tecumseh. The commander of the force was Colonel St. George, and the only fortified position, with very weak defences, was Fort Malden at Amherstburg. Had Hull marched in strength on the fort immediately after he had effected the passage of the river, there can be little doubt but that the fort must have fallen, and the British garrison been annihilated; but the American general, who afterwards gave as his reason for delay the necessity of mounting his heavy guns on wheels, contented himself in the meantime with dispatching raiding parties, to collect supplies and to bring over Canadian residents to the American cause. According to his own account, they 'penetrated sixty miles in the settled part of the province'; in General Brock's words, they 'ravaged the country as far as the Moravian Town' on the line of the river Thames. Detachments too were sent out, who on two or three occasions skirmished with Tecumseh's Indians on the Rivière aux Canards, and with a British outpost who held the bridge over that stream on the Sandwich road.

Hull crosses into Canada.

On hearing of the American invasion, Brock made arrangements to send reinforcements down the river Thames, which flows into Lake St. Clair above Detroit;

Colonel Procter sent by Brock to take command at Amherstburg.

but the party was delayed, and he sent off Colonel Procter of the 41st regiment to take command at Amherstburg. Procter reached Amherstburg towards the end of July; a few days later a further small detachment of his regiment arrived; and, as the English commanded the Detroit river, he determined at once to cut Hull's land communications with the Maumee river and the Ohio settlements. He threw some of his small force across the river; and, on

Skirmish between Indians and Americans near Brownstown on the line of Hull's communications.

August 5, Tecumseh and a small party of Indians ambushed, near Brownstown, a detachment of 200 Americans who had been sent out from Detroit to meet and escort back to that place supplies which were waiting for safe convoy at the river au Raisin. The Americans were repulsed, the dispatches which they were carrying were captured, and the result of the incident was that, on the night of August 7 and on the following morning, Hull brought back his whole force from the Canadian side of the river to Detroit,

Hull retreats to Detroit.

with the exception of a small party who fortified and held a house at Sandwich. On the same day, August 8, Hull sent out a stronger force than before, some 600 men, mainly regular troops, to reopen communications with the river au Raisin and bring up the much needed supplies. On the afternoon of the 9th this detachment reached a

Fight at Maguaga.

place called Maguaga, fourteen miles south of Detroit, and about four miles north of Brownstown. There the advance was disputed by a mixed body of regulars, Canadian militia, and Indians: and though the intercepting force, outnumbered by the Americans, suffered loss and was compelled to fall back for a short distance, it took up a new position still barring the way, with the result that the American commander, though slightly reinforced on the following day, felt unable to break the line, and returned to Detroit, while the English on the river captured the boats which were taking back the wounded [1]. Hull was now placed in a difficult and discouraging position. The

[1] Christie gives August 7 as the date of the capture of the boats, and Kingsford repeats it. As they were carrying back the Americans who were wounded on the 9th, the date is obviously wrong.

surrendered garrison of Michillimackinac had reached Detroit at the beginning of August, the best evidence of the loss of that post. The Indians were up in arms in all directions. He had heard from the Niagara frontier that he could expect no co-operation; he had heard that a British force was trying to make its way down the river Thames, and that fresh soldiers had reached or were about to arrive at Amherstburg. On the 11th, he brought back to Detroit the small detachment of 250 infantry and a few gunners who were still on the Canadian side at Sandwich; and on the evening of the 13th, he sent out once more a picked party of 350 to 400 men under two of his best officers, Colonels MacArthur and Cass, to try and make their way by a circuitous route to the river au Raisin. On that same night of August 13, Brock arrived at Amherstburg.

Brock reaches Amherstburg.

From the moment when he was certified that war had been declared, Brock had acted with marked vigour and energy, proving himself to be a fit leader for the United Empire Loyalists of Upper Canada. He left York for Fort George on the Niagara frontier, it is stated, with the intention of attacking the American fort Niagara on the opposite bank of the river. Whether he had it in his mind or not, he did not take the step, possibly because the news of Hull's invasion reached him[1]; and, answering that general's proclamation with a counter-proclamation dated from Fort George on July 22, he hastened back to York, the little capital of Upper Canada, where in view of the crisis he held a special session of the Legislature of the Province. The session only lasted from July 27 to August 5; the malcontents in the Assembly prevented a Bill being passed for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus

Special session of the Legislature of Upper Canada.

[1] Prevost, in a dispatch to Lord Liverpool of July 15, 1812, stated that the Americans had intended to surprise Fort George, that Brock's arrival at Fort George induced them to forego their plan, that Brock felt justified in attacking but, in view of the weakness of the position at St. Joseph's and on the Detroit frontier, and considering that he could do no more at the time than reduce Fort Niagara, which could be done as well later, he decided to remain on the defensive.

Act, but the necessary supplies were voted. The proceedings closed with a strongly worded patriotic address to the inhabitants of Upper Canada from the House of Assembly, taking the line which Brock himself had taken, that the Americans, while invading Canada in the name of liberty, were dominated by Bonaparte, the despot of nations, and reminding Canadians in somewhat florid language that 'now you have an opportunity of proving your attachment to the parent state, which contends for the relief of oppressed nations, the last pillar of true liberty, and the last refuge of oppressed humanity'. No such exhortation was in fact needed, for, in response to Brock's call for volunteers to accompany him to the Detroit frontier, many more came forward than could be taken. Among the officers who went with him was Macdonell, the Attorney-General of Upper Canada, one of the Glengarry Macdonells, who now took arms, served as Aide-de-Camp on the General's staff with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, was deputed to arrange the terms of Hull's surrender, and subsequently was killed with Brock on Queenston Heights. There went too a young student in Macdonell's office, Lieutenant Robinson of the York militia, who was one of the party detached to take formal possession of Fort Detroit after the capitulation, and who in after years was Sir John Beverley Robinson, Chief Justice of Upper Canada.

Volunteers called out.

Immediately after the prorogation of the Legislature Brock left for the west. He crossed to Burlington Bay, and then marched overland to Long Point on Lake Erie. Here, on August 8, he embarked his party, consisting of 260 militia and 40 regulars, all that the boats could carry; and, coasting along Lake Erie with such speed as bad weather allowed, reached Amherstburg in five days. Before his arrival, immediately after the last of the Americans had left Sandwich, Procter had thrown forward troops to that place, and had begun erecting batteries directly opposite Detroit. By the 15th the guns were in position, and opened fire, after Hull had been summoned to

Batteries erected against Detroit on

capitulate and had refused. On that afternoon, and on the following morning, the gun-fire did considerable damage, among the killed being the commander of the force that had surrendered at Michillimackinac and been sent on parole to Detroit. Early on the morning of the 16th Brock, a true disciple of Wolfe in judgment and daring, against the advice of Colonel Procter, carried a force of white troops across the river at Spring Wells about three miles below Detroit, Tecumseh and a band of Indians having already crossed two miles lower down. The white troops consisted of rather over 700 men, including a very small detachment of artillery with five light guns : the Indians numbered 600. There was no difficulty in the crossing ; the British battery on the Canadian side commanded the fort, and the only armed vessels at this end of Lake Erie were British, and had been brought up the Detroit river near to the scene of action, giving valuable assistance, as appears from Brock's general order, issued immediately after the capitulation took place. Brock placed the Indians in the woods on the inland side of his force, about a mile and a half on his left, and intended, as his dispatch tells us, to wait in a strong position and compel the Americans to attack him in the open field. Learning, however, when he had crossed the river, that MacArthur's party had left Detroit three days before, and that American cavalry had been seen three miles in the rear of the British force, he resolved to take the aggressive himself, and moved forward within a mile of the fort, purposing to attack both the fort and the American camp which adjoined it, from the side furthest from the river. Before the assault could be delivered, Hull proposed a capitulation, and in an hour the terms were settled; the last article stipulating that the garrison should march out of the fort at noon, and that the British forces should take immediate possession of it. MacArthur's detachment, which at the time was, in accordance with orders, making its way back to the fort, was included in the surrender ; thirty-three pieces of cannon of one kind or

the other side of the river.

Brock throws a force across the river

and advances on Detroit.

Hull capitulates.

another fell into British hands, and the prisoners were estimated at not less than 2,500 men.

On the same day Brock issued a general order to the troops, and a proclamation which treated the capitulation of Detroit as tantamount to the cession to Great Britain of the Territory of Michigan, and assured the inhabitants of personal security under existing laws and of the free exercise of their religion[1]. On the next day, the 17th, he wrote an account of what had taken place to Sir George Prevost, commenting, among other points, on the 'order and steadiness' of the Indians and their humanity to the few prisoners who fell into their hands. The same fact was noted in his general order. It ended with the words, 'Two fortifications have already been captured from the enemy without a drop of blood being shed by the hand of the Indian; the instant the enemy submitted, his life became sacred.' Though Tecumseh was among the Indians, Brock had taken the precaution to place two white officers at their head when advancing against Detroit; and it is noteworthy, as proving the good faith of the Canadian government towards the United States in the matter of the recent wars between the Americans and the Indians, that Brock's dispatch to Prevost mentions that, at the time when Hull's invasion took place, some of the principal Indian chiefs happened to be at Amherstburg, trying to procure arms and ammunition, 'which for years had been withheld, agreeably to the instructions received from Sir James Craig and since repeated by your Excellency.' The American volunteers and militia were sent home on parole, the regulars were sent as prisoners to Montreal and thence to Quebec, whence Hull was allowed to go to Boston on parole. Colonel Procter was placed in charge of Fort Detroit; and on August 24, eight days after the capitulation, the tireless general was back at Fort George on the Niagara river, having narrowly escaped being taken prisoner by the Americans, owing to a fog during which the

Good conduct of the Indians on the British side.

Brock returns to the Niagara frontier.

[1] Brock's proclamation went beyond the terms of capitulation. See the *Life of Sir John Beverley Robinson* [Blackwood, 1904], p. 60.

little vessel which had brought him down Lake Erie drifted into Buffalo instead of into Fort Erie.

On August 26, General Hull, now a prisoner of war, wrote from Fort George a full report to the American Secretary of War, giving his account of the circumstances which led to the surrender. A different account, bitterly attacking Hull, was written at Washington on September 10 by Colonel Lewis Cass, politician as well as soldier, who claimed to speak for others of the commanding officers as well as for himself. A year and a half later, a court-martial sentenced Hull to death, but President Madison remitted the death sentence in view of Hull's previous good service to his country. There can be no doubt that Hull had failed in his duty. Old and timorous, he had yielded where a firm, determined leader would have held out and possibly gained a victory. He claimed that on the day of capitulation his whole effective force did not exceed 800 men, that he could not have taken the field with more than 600, that the regular British force alone was more than double that number, in addition to twice the number of Indians, and that powder and provisions were running short. Cass traversed his figures and his facts, at pains to prove that the general's excuses could not be accepted. Yet, given the great original mistake of not at once advancing on Amherstburg, there was nothing unaccountable in Hull's surrender. The water-way was in British hands. The American soldiers were mainly untrained militiamen. The fort of Detroit was cumbered with non-combatants. The woods swarmed with Indians. Two attempts to reopen land communications had already failed. The force at Detroit was far removed from all support, and Hull had been definitely warned that no diversion could be made in his favour. Above all, the leader of the opposing force was an expert soldier of comparatively recent experience in war such as no one on the American side possessed: he was a man of rare nerve and fine military instinct. Few leaders would have risked throwing a small force over the river against a larger white force in a fortified

Views as to Hull's surrender.

Brock's merits.

position. Fewer still, on hearing of a force in their rear as well, would have even held their ground instead of retreating—much less would have moved on to attack. Detroit might not have fallen, if another general than Hull had commanded the Americans; it certainly would not have fallen, if another general than Brock had commanded the English.

Fort Chicago abandoned by the Americans.

On the day that the Americans, moving out towards the river au Raisin, were repulsed at Maguaga, August 9, a dispatch from General Hull reached the officer commanding a small American outpost at Fort Chicago at the end of Lake Michigan. This seems to be the first time that Chicago appears in history, for La Salle's old fort at the end of the lake, Fort Miami, stood on the opposite—the south-eastern side, at the mouth of the St. Joseph river. The garrison consisted of fifty-four regulars and twelve militiamen. The commandant, Captain Heald, was ordered by Hull to evacuate the post, disposing of the public property as he thought fit, and to make his way by land to Detroit across the Michigan peninsula, first traversed by La Salle in his memorable winter march of 1680. Some thirty Miami Indians, under an American officer, were sent from Fort Wayne at the head of the Maumee river to act as an escort. The stores and provisions at the fort, other than liquor, surplus guns, and ammunition, which were destroyed, were distributed to the neighbouring Indians who had collected for the purpose, and on August 15 Heald began his march. He had only gone about a mile and a half along the shore of the lake when the Indians attacked him. Half of his regulars and all the militia were killed[1]; the rest surrendered on promise that their lives should be spared, and were distributed among the Indians, who destroyed the fort and then went off to attack Fort Wayne. Heald and his wife, both wounded, were cared for at a trader's house at the mouth of the St. Joseph river, and then found their way to Michillimackinac

The retreating garrison attacked by Indians and the majority killed.

[1] There were also women and children, but the dispatch does not read as if any were, at any rate intentionally, killed.

where Captain Roberts, now in charge of that fort, took every care of him, and sent him on safely as a prisoner on parole to Detroit. Thence he was sent on to Buffalo, and so to Presque Isle and Pittsburg, where he arrived on October 22 and wrote the next day a report of what had befallen him. This completed the tale of American reverses in the Far West.

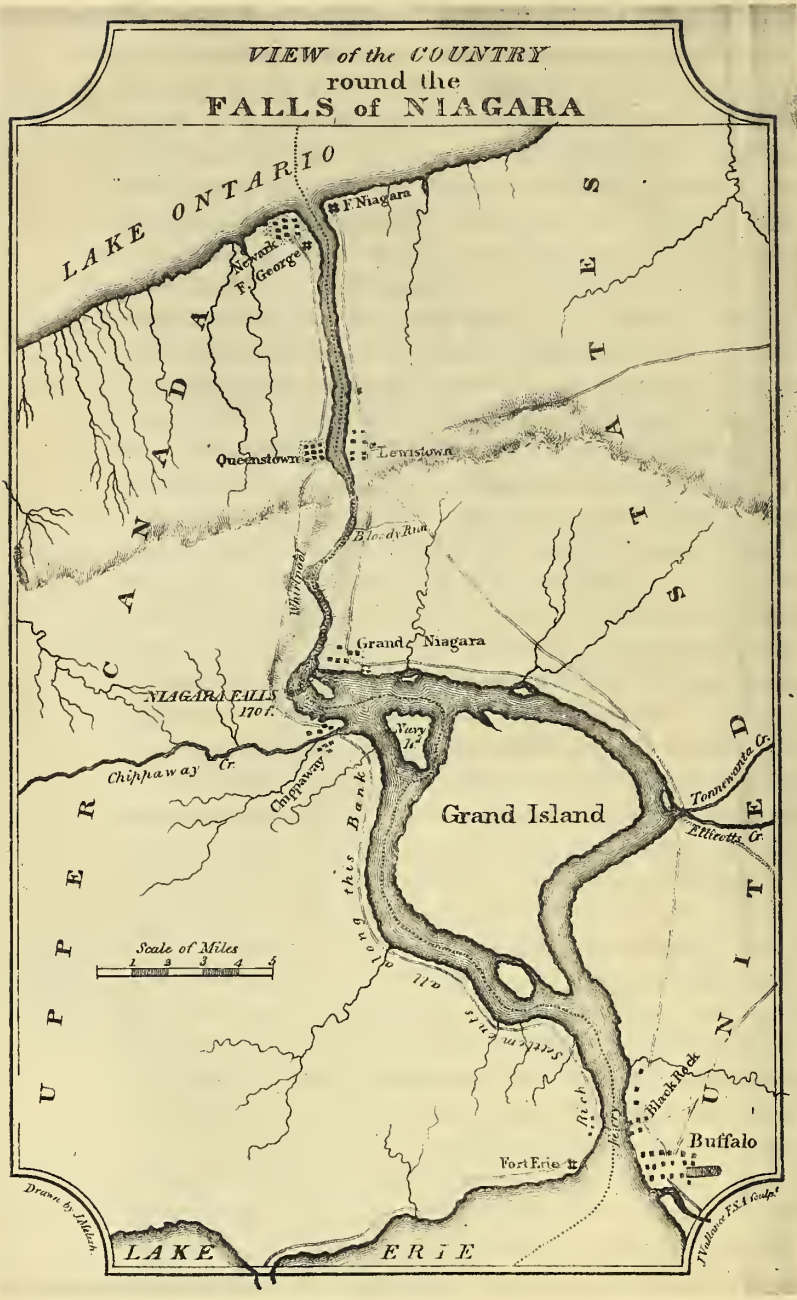
General Dearborn.

General Dearborn was the Commander-in-Chief of the American army of invasion, excepting the Detroit army which acted under the direct instructions of the Secretary of War. His head quarters were at Greenbush in New York State, on the eastern bank of the Hudson, nearly opposite Albany, the old historic starting-point for invasions of Canada. While Brock was setting out for the west, Sir George Prevost, who had come up from Quebec to Montreal, and who had learnt from England that Lord Liverpool's government had repealed the obnoxious Orders in Council, sent Colonel Baynes, his Adjutant-General, to Dearborn to propose a suspension of hostilities as preliminary to negotiations for peace. Prevost's letter, dated August 2, asked that no further movements should in the meantime be made by the American troops, and added that, on hearing to that effect, he himself would give similar orders to the British forces. In taking this step, Prevost rightly interpreted the wishes of the Home government. The British ministry was anxious to maintain or to restore peace with the United States, provided that this end could be obtained without compromising the rights which they held to be essential for the security of Great Britain in time of war. The American minister in London had not left immediately upon the declaration of war by his government, but in August and September continued to make overtures to Lord Castlereagh for an armistice. His proposals, however, were rejected, for they amounted to an admission of the American claims as a preliminary to even a temporary cessation of warfare. In turn, Admiral Warren, the British naval commander at Halifax, was, subsequently

Prevost proposes an armistice.

to the date of Prevost's negotiations, instructed to propose direct to the American government the conclusion of an armistice on the basis that the Orders in Council had been repealed, without raising at this stage the questions which the American government considered vital; but this proposal again, which was embodied in a letter dated September 30, was, on October 27, rejected in a letter from Monroe, the American Secretary of State. Had telegraphs existed in those days, it is possible—though with the existing temper of the American leaders not very probable—that war might have been averted. On the other hand, it is certain that Brock's successes would not have taken place. The Americans, though they may not have known it, had much to gain by a short delay, for they were to a singular degree unprepared, and the one man on either side, who had the instinct amounting to genius to strike at once and hard, was Brock. He heard of the armistice just before he reached Fort George on his return down Lake Erie from Detroit. Baynes handed Prevost's letter to Dearborn on August 8; the latter undertook to forward it to his government, and, in the meantime, to instruct all the officers on the frontier who were under his command to refrain from offensive movement, until the President's instructions had been received. In the event of the President refusing to ratify the armistice, an interval of four days was to be allowed before hostilities began again. On August 26, Dearborn wrote to Prevost to the effect that, as President Madison had received no official intimation from the British government which would warrant a continuance of the armistice, war would begin again four days after his—Dearborn's—letter reached Montreal. Thus Prevost's well-meant effort to stop the war came to nothing, and meanwhile the Americans brought ammunition and supplies up Lake Ontario under cover of the truce, while Brock had to look on, eager to attack Fort Niagara, or, at the other end of Lake Ontario, to clear out the American naval dépôt at Sackett's Harbour which threatened Kingston.

President Madison refuses to ratify it.


VIEW of the COUNTRY
round the
FALLS of NIAGARA
LAKE ONTARIO
Ft Niagara
Newark
Ft George
CANADA
UNITED STATES
Queenstown
Lewistown
Bloody Run
Whirlpool
Grand Niagara
NIAGARA FALLS
170 f.
Navy I.
Chippaway Cr.
Chippaway
Grand Island
Tonnewanta C.
Ellicotts C.
Scale of Miles
1 2 3 4 5
Black Rock
Buffalo
Fort Erie
Drawn by J.Walsh.
Wallcut FSA sculpt
LAKE ERIE
UPPER

In February, 1809, Sir James Craig, expecting war with the United States, had written to Lord Castlereagh as to the defenceless state of Canada. The safety of Quebec he rightly considered to be the point of first importance, for, as he urged, while its possession would not ensure the retention of the rest of the province of Lower Canada, it would leave a door open to regain the province if conquered by the Americans, as indeed had proved to be the case in the previous war. He noted that the conquest of Lower Canada must still be effected by the line of Lake Champlain, where the forts on the Canadian frontier had ceased to exist, and had not been re-established for want of men to garrison them. Upper Canada, he thought, would most probably be invaded across the Niagara river; and he argued that, as that river was only thirty-five miles long and nine of those miles were impassable on account of the falls, the rest might be effectually guarded. To ensure the safety of the two Canadas against American invasion, he considered that at least 12,000 regular troops were required, in addition to sufficient vessels to command the water. The passage of the Niagara river was now to be attempted by the American forces.

Sir James Craig's views as to the number of troops required to defend Canada.

The number of troops to guard the river on the Canadian side was ludicrously inadequate, hardly amounting, it was said, to 1,200 white men, including militia. Brock could not be given reinforcements from Lower Canada, because Montreal was threatened by another American army coming up from Lake Champlain. The regulars belonged to the 41st and 49th regiment. A strong detachment of the 41st was stationed at Fort George at one end of the line, a party of the 49th helped to garrison Fort Erie at the other end. At the two intermediate posts of Chippawa and Queenston there were further detachments of the two regiments, a small number of men from the 41st being at Chippawa, while the two flank companies of the 49th were placed at Queenston. The Canadian militia equalled the regulars in numbers, and were distributed side by side with them at the four main posts. In addition, there were

Disposal of the British forces on the Niagara frontier.

small intermediate outposts and batteries at convenient points, between Fort Erie and Chippawa, and between Queenston and Fort George. The Americans gradually collected on their side some 6,000 men[1], mainly stationed at Buffalo, Black Rock, Lewiston, Fort Niagara, and the stream known as Four Mile Creek, which runs into Lake Ontario about four miles east of the mouth of the Niagara river. A cross-country road, about six miles in length, had been cut through the woods from Lewiston to Four Mile Creek, so that troops could be moved between the two points, behind and wholly out of sight and range of the Niagara river, and from the outlet of the Creek into Lake Ontario boats could coast along the lake, under a sheltered shore, to the estuary of the Niagara, for the purpose of crossing into Canada, instead of embarking troops at Fort Niagara in the face of the enemy on the opposite side. The American army, like the small force opposed to them, consisted partly of regulars, partly of militia; but the regulars outnumbered the militia by 1,000 men. The bulk of the regulars were posted at the two ends of the line, at the lower end at Fort Niagara and Four Mile Creek, at the upper end at Buffalo and Black Rock, where Brigadier-General Smyth, an officer of the line, held command. In the centre, at Lewiston, there were over 2,000 militia with only 900 regulars. Here the commander of the whole, Stephen Van Rensselaer, had his head quarters. He was an old militia officer, who had served in the Indian wars, chosen from his high standing in New York state, inasmuch as the militia were largely citizens of that state. The Rensselaers from Dutch times had held a foremost place among the patroons or land-owners of New York; and in the days when New York was New Amsterdam, the inland district round Albany, then Fort Orange, was known as Rensselaerswyck. It is evident from his dispatch, written after the battle of Queenston, that Van Rensselaer was a straightforward,

Disposal of the American forces.

Stephen Van Rensselaer.

[1] An American return made the number rather less—a little over five thousand.

capable man, but he had no regular military training, and hence he failed to obtain the co-operation of General Smyth, who was nominally subordinate to him. He had, however, an expert military adviser by his side, in his cousin Colonel Solomon Van Rensselaer.

Van Rensselaer prepares to attack Queenston.

August and September went by in making preparations ; and at the beginning of October it became evident that, if any decisive attack was to be made on Upper Canada before the winter, and if the militia were not to drift off again as they had drifted together, there must be no longer delay. Van Rensselaer planned—a sensible enough plan—to concentrate his forces below the falls, to pass the regulars over from Four Mile Creek into Canada and attack Fort George from the land side, and with the militia to make a frontal attack from Lewiston on Queenston Heights. General Smyth, stationed with his troops above the falls, thought that the attack should be made in that direction, and held aloof. Consequently, the plan eventually resolved itself into an attack on Queenston, in which the troops at Lewiston were supported by men brought up from other points, while Fort Niagara and Fort George bombarded each other.

As often happens, the scheme, after considerable delay, was somewhat hurried at last. Two incidents occurred to make the American militia and their general impatient to attack. The first was a very daring and skilful exploit on the part of Lieutenant Jesse Elliott of the United States navy, who was at Black Rock and Buffalo buying and fitting out vessels for war service on Lake Erie. On October 8, two ships from Detroit anchored at Fort Erie. One was the *Detroit*, formerly known as the *Adams*, an American brig of 200 tons burden, which had changed owners and name at the capitulation of Detroit ; she was manned by some sixty men and had thirty American prisoners on board. The other was the *Caledonia*, a smaller vessel belonging to the North-West Company, which also carried a few prisoners in addition to a valuable cargo of furs. On hearing of their arrival, Elliott sent

Two British vessels cut out at Fort Erie by Lieut. Jesse Elliott.

an urgent message to a party of sailors who were marching up to join him overland, and who came in about noon on the 8th, and, supplementing them with some regular soldiers, put off from the mouth of Buffalo Creek in two large boats, with fifty men in each, at one o'clock on the morning of the 9th. At three o'clock he was alongside the two vessels, and, according to his own account, took possession of them in about ten minutes. The *Caledonia* was carried off and beached under the guns of Black Rock. The *Detroit* drifted down stream under fire and grounded on a small island, where, after the crew and prisoners, or the majority of them, had been carried off to the American side, and a party of British troops had tried in vain to recover the vessel, she was destroyed by the fire of friend and foe alike. Brock seems to have come to Fort Erie by the evening of the 9th, probably on hearing of Elliott's attack; and this may have given rise to a report, which was brought by a spy to Van Rensselaer's camp, that the British commander had moved off with a large part of his troops towards Detroit to meet the army of General Harrison in that quarter. This report, supervening upon the news of Elliott's success, made the Americans eager to cross into Canada.

Report brought to Van Rensselaer that Brock had gone to the West.

Warned by those under him that his troops must have orders to act or would go home, Van Rensselaer fixed four o'clock on the morning of October 11 for the crossing. The point of embarkation was to be at the Old Ferry immediately opposite Queenston Heights, a little higher up the river than the ordinary landing place at Lewiston. An officer named Lieutenant Sim who, Van Rensselaer's dispatch tells us, 'was considered the man of greatest skill for this service,' was placed in charge of the leading boat. Rowing across in the darkness, by accident or intent he reached the Canadian shore some distance above the point where it had been intended to land, and, mooring his boat to the shore, absconded. It was then found that his boat carried nearly all the oars of the other boats, with the result that the would-be invaders, after a night's exposure

Abortive attempt at crossing the river by Van Rensselaer's force.

on the edge of the river to a violent storm from the north-east which lasted for twenty-eight hours, returned to the camp without being embarked at all. This fiasco made Van Rensselaer's restive force more restive still, and two days later he was compelled, without maturing his plans, to repeat the attempt. On the evening of the 12th, regulars were brought in from Fort Niagara and Four Mile Creek, under a good officer, Colonel Christie, who had lately come up to the front, as well as from a post on the other side of Lewiston at Niagara falls; and just before dawn on the morning of the 13th the crossing began.

The defenders and defences of Queenston.

The defenders of Queenston numbered about 300, including the two companies of the 49th and detachments of Canadian militia from York and Lincoln counties. They were expecting attack, having been warned by Major—afterwards General—Evans. Evans, who was Brigade-Major at Fort George, had gone over the river under flag of truce on the 12th to negotiate an exchange of prisoners, and had noted preparations for crossing.[1] Accordingly, a part of the small force was watching the landing near the village below the heights, while the rest were stationed on the higher ground where, though not on the topmost crest, was a battery consisting of one gun only, an eighteen-pounder. The nearest support was at a point some little distance below Queenston[2], named Vrooman's Point, where there was a twenty-four-pounder in charge of a small party of militia; two miles below which by the course of the river, though not much more than that distance in a direct line from Queenston, a larger detachment of the York militia at Brown's Point guarded another little battery.

[1] For the evidence of this see Major Evans' own account, written on October 15, two days after the battle, and printed as Appendix 1 to Mrs. Curzon's *Laura Secord, the heroine of 1812, and other poems*, Toronto, 1887. It is referred to by Kingsford, vol. viii, p. 214, and is reprinted in the *Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier in 1812*, part 2, 1812, pp. 108–14 [Lundy's Lane Historical Society].

[2] Vrooman's point is said in the accounts to have been a mile below Queenston, but the site of the battery must have been rather nearer, as the gun was active in annoying the crossing of the Americans and supporting the British garrison at Queenston when repulsed.

Lower down again, between six and seven miles from Queenston, were the headquarters at Fort George, and here was Brock on the night of the 12th and early morning of the 13th; and here, too, was his second in command, Major-General Roger Sheaffe, also an officer of the 49th regiment, a New Englander by birth.

The crossing begins.

On the American side, in order to avoid jealousy between regulars and militia and their officers, it had been arranged that the first boats should carry over 300 regulars and 300 militiamen, the latter under command of Colonel Solomon Van Rensselaer, the former under Colonel Christie. There was confusion in the darkness or half-light, and though, under the cover of fire from the American batteries, Solomon Van Rensselaer reached the other side, he had with him, according to the American dispatch, only about 100 men, according to other and apparently more correct accounts, about 225, nearly all regulars. Christie, with some of the other boats, had to put back to the American shore and cross again, Christie himself being wounded in the hand. Van Rensselaer's party, having landed, were drawn up to await the arrival of reinforcements, when they were hotly attacked by some of the grenadiers of the 49th and a party of militia with a three-

The first fight.

pounder gun. The Americans suffered considerable loss, Van Rensselaer being badly wounded, and were driven under cover of the bank. Fresh boat-loads, however, came over, not without loss from artillery and musket fire, alike from the level of the landing and from the high ground above; and at this juncture, apparently about

Brock comes up.

five o'clock in the morning, Brock came on the field. The firing had been heard at Fort George, and mounting his horse he had galloped off to the scene of action, alone and unattended, though followed immediately afterwards by his two aides-de-camp, Lieutenant-Colonel Macdonell and Captain Glegg. Calling on the militia at Brown's Point, as he passed, to follow with what speed they might, he made straight for the gun on the hill which was the key of the position, and where the light company of the 49th, and

those of the Canadian militia who were not fighting at the landing and in the village below, were guarding the gun and supplementing its fire with their own musketry. Seeing the American troops come across in growing numbers, Brock ordered the whole party, with the exception of about a dozen men, to go down the hill and reinforce their comrades by the river. This movement occasioned the first crisis in the battle.

The Americans gain the Heights.

An American officer, with the first detachment that had landed with Colonel Van Rensselaer and that had, as already told, been driven to take shelter under the river bank, was ordered by Van Rensselaer to take a party of his men up a steep path which had been left unguarded, and which gave access to Queenston Heights above and behind the point where the gun was placed. This officer, Captain Wool [1], afterwards an American general of some

[1] Captain Wool's report to Colonel Van Rensselaer is printed as Appendix 12 to James's *Military Occurrences*, vol. i. p. 384, and is reprinted at pp. 155–6 of part 2, 1812, of the *Documentary History of the Campaign upon the Niagara frontier in the year* 1812 (Lundy's Lane Historical Society). It is headed Buffalo, October 23, and it is difficult to harmonize this date and address, and the fact that Captain Wool is not included in the list of American officers taken prisoners, though he is returned as wounded, with Sir John Beverley Robinson's statement that, two days after the battle, he was one of a party of York militia who escorted Captain Wool and other prisoners on an armed vessel across Lake Ontario for Toronto, Kingston, and Quebec, the passage being tedious, and taking some days (*Life of Sir John Beverley Robinson*, p. 39). Wool's report runs as follows: 'In pursuance of your order we proceeded round the point, and ascended the rocks, which brought us partly in rear of the battery. We took it without much resistance. I immediately formed the troops in rear of the battery and fronting the village, when I observed General Brock with his troops formed, consisting of four companies of the 49th regiment, and a few militia, marching for our left flank. I immediately detached a party of one hundred and fifty men to take possession of the heights above Queenston battery, and to hold General Brock in check, but in consequence of his superior force they retreated. I sent a reinforcement; notwithstanding which, the enemy drove us to the edge of the bank; when, with the greatest exertions, we brought the troops to a stand, and ordered the officers to bring their men to a charge as soon as the ammunition was expended, which was executed with some confusion, and in a few moments the enemy retreated. We pursued them to the edge of the heights, when Colonel MacDonald had

note, carried out his orders with a detachment consisting at first of about sixty men, and rushed the gun, Brock and the few men with him having to retreat downhill. Recalling the light company, Brock, at the head of about ninety men, charged uphill on the left—the inland flank of the Americans, retook the gun, and drove Wool's men (now it would seem at least 150 in number) further up the height to the extreme edge of the bank, where they rallied and held their ground. At this point in the engagement Brock, in the forefront of the fight, received a mortal wound and died almost immediately, his body being carried back to Queenston. His men were then once more driven back downhill, and once more the Americans retook the gun. Shortly before he fell Brock had given orders, it is said, to push on the York Volunteers. These were the detachment of Canadian militia stationed at Brown's Point, on whom he had called when hurrying by at break of day. They came up just as the general fell, among them being Beverley Robinson, who, in a letter written on the following day, gave a graphic account of the fighting [1]. Colonel Macdonell took command of them and of the soldiers of the 49th, making about 200 men in all. Again there was a charge uphill, on the right of the battery and against the

Death of Brock.

Macdonell mortally wounded.

his horse shot from under him, and himself was mortally wounded. In the interim, General Brock, in attempting to rally his forces, was killed, when the enemy dispersed in every direction.' It will be seen that Wool overestimated the number of troops under Brock, and that he only mentions one charge, in which Macdonell was mortally wounded about the same time as Brock.

[1] This letter, which will be found at p. 33 of the *Life of Sir John Beverley Robinson*, gives a most graphic account of the day's fighting. Among other points the writer mentions (1) that, as his detachment was hurrying up from Brown's Point to Queenston, 'we met troops of Americans on their way to Fort George under guard,' showing that a considerable number of prisoners were taken at the first crossing, and that men could be spared from Queenston to take charge of them; (2) that 'scarcely more than fifty were collected' for the second charge which Macdonell headed, and in which he was mortally wounded; (3) that the Chippawa contingent did not join Sheaffe's army until after the final charge had begun. The different accounts of the day's proceedings, and the numbers given, are so much at variance with each other, that it is impossible to be certain as to details.

American left. Again the Americans were driven from the gun which they spiked; and once more the attack eventually failed, Colonel Macdonell being, like his chief, mortally wounded, and Captain Williams, who commanded the light company of the 49th, being badly wounded also. The British were then finally repulsed, and had to fall back to the further outskirts of Queenston village, where they received some support from the battery at Vrooman's Point.

The Americans in complete possession of the heights.

Though it was still only ten o'clock in the morning, the battle seemed over. The Americans held the heights. There was an interval of between four and five hours, during which the wounded could be sent back to the American shore, fresh reinforcements could be brought over, steps could be taken to entrench the position, an engineer officer having come across for the purpose, and the gun which had been spiked could be drilled out and brought to bear on the village below. Yet the invaders were not unmolested. On the further side of the village, backed by the staunch twenty-four-pounder at Vrooman's Point, the regulars and militia still held their ground; while a diversion of some importance was made on the land side of Queenston Heights by a band of Mohawk Indians [1], who drove in the flanking parties which the commander of the American force had thrown out, until in turn they were beaten off by superior numbers. All that the Americans required to ensure success was to lose no time in bringing across ample reinforcements and abundant ammunition; but the militia who remained on the opposite bank showed no disposition to move, and not all the commands and exhortations of General Van Rensselaer, who had been over the river to the heights and had come back to hasten the crossing, availed to effect the pur-

Interval in the fighting.

The American militia refuse to cross the river.

[1] These Indians, who played a very considerable part in the day's proceedings, were led by a man called Norton, who called himself a Mohawk chief, but seems to have been an Indianized Scotchman. He was a fine fighting man, but otherwise very troublesome to the government in their relations with the Indians. See Mr. Brymner's *Report on the Canadian Archives for* 1896, pp. viii–xiii.

pose. 'The name of Indian, or the sight of the wounded, or the devil, or something else, petrified them,' wrote an eyewitness; 'not a regiment, not a company, scarcely a man, would go.'[1] So the day went on, and for the Americans the day was lost.

When Brock rode out from Fort George at dawn to the sound of the guns, he had thought that the attack might be but a feint, to cover another and more serious attempt on Fort George itself; but, when he found the Americans on Queenston Heights, he sent instructions to General Sheaffe to bring up all available reinforcements. In the meantime, the reverses which have been described took place, and, by the time that Sheaffe was nearing the scene of action, Brock and Macdonell had fallen, and the Americans were masters of the position. Sheaffe brought with him a strong detachment of the 41st regiment, variously estimated to number from 300 to 380 men, some 300 of the Canadian militia, a few light field guns, in part manned by Canadian farmers and drawn by their horses, forming what was called the Car brigade, and also a party of Indians. He had his men well in hand, and led them with the coolness and decision of a good trained soldier.

Sheaffe brings up reinforcements from Fort George,

A little lower down the river than Queenston village, a road diverged at right angles from the main road by the river side, leading to the village of St. David's, about one and a half miles distant. Instead of following the course of the previous assaults, Sheaffe struck inland by this road, taking with him, in addition to the men whom he had brought from Fort George, part of the force which had been defending Queenston and assailing the heights, but leaving some guns under a Royal Artillery officer, Captain Holcroft, supported by a small body of infantry, to hold the Americans in front and command the crossing. Making a wide détour with the main body of his troops, he brought them right behind Queenston Heights on the in-

makes a détour inland,

[1] Letter of John Lovett, p. 86 of part 2, 1812, of the *Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier in* 1812 (Lundy's Lane Historical Society).

land side. There he effected a junction with the party of Indians who, as has been told, had already been fighting the Americans on their own account, and who, though beaten off, were still in a strong position 'on the woody brow of the high ground above Queenston'[1]. There too he struck the road from Chippawa, and from that place in the nick of time came up another small party of the 41st and a stronger detachment of militia. This brought up his numbers to at least 1,000 men with two three-pounder guns. He carefully arranged his line; he took Indian guidance for his advance through the woods; and a little before three o'clock in the afternoon he moved forward against the victorious Americans. The two opposing lines were now at right angles to the positions taken up in the morning. Then the American troops on the height had faced down-stream, meeting their assailants who came up parallel with the river from Queenston village. They were still being worried on that side by Holcroft's guns, but it became their right flank, as they faced about with their backs to the river to meet the force which Sheaffe was leading on. He had left nothing to fortune. In lieu of a handful of brave men, momentarily gathered to repel a surprise, scrambling up a steep bank, exposed to fire from an enemy above who had the advantage of numbers and position, there was now a substantial force, including at least 500 soldiers of the line, most of them fresh for fighting, not hurried, not placed haphazard, advancing under cover on the level or up an easy slope. Against them the enemy was cooped up in a narrow space, tired by the morning's work, left without supports, unsteadied through the day by Indian sorties from the wooded ridge, and constant gunfire from the village below. One charge was decisive. The Indians on the extreme left of the British line leapt forward, whooping, on the American right, that part of their line which was exposed to Holcroft's guns. At the same point a small body of British light infantry and Canadian

and carries the heights.

[1] From Sheaffe's dispatch to Sir G. Prevost, reporting the battle, which was written on the same day.

militia gave one volley, and then went in with the bayonet. Almost simultaneously the whole of Sheaffe's force attacked, and the Americans on Queenston Heights disappeared as a fighting body. Many were driven over the bank and into the river; the majority under General Wadsworth were forced to surrender; and, before the afternoon was far spent, all the Americans that remained on the Canadian side of the Niagara river, between 900 and 1,000, if account be taken of the whole day's work, were taken prisoners under the eyes of their comrades on the opposite shore.

Defeat and capture of the American force on the Canadian side of the river.

Among the prisoners was Colonel Winfield Scott, an artillery officer who had taken a leading part in the fighting, and who was in later times for twenty years the well-known Commander-in-chief of the army of the United States. The numbers of killed and wounded on either side are variously given, but the American loss appears to have been far heavier than that of the British. 'The slaughter of our troops must have been very considerable,' General Van Rensselaer wrote in his report of the battle, 'and the enemy have suffered severely.' Only two officers are said to have been killed on the British side, but they were Brock and Macdonell, and the effect of Brock's death was apparent at once. Had he lived, none can doubt that, with his wonted energy, he would have lost no time in following up the success. We read in Sheaffe's dispatch that 'Major-General Brock, soon after his arrival at Queenston, had sent down orders for battering the American fort Niagara'. Accordingly, while Queenston was the scene of attack and counter-attack, an artillery duel was in progress between the two forts, and the British guns, directed by Major Evans, were so well served that the American garrison was for the time driven out of Fort Niagara. It would have been a task of little difficulty to throw a body of men across the river, and occupy or dismantle the American fort. But Sheaffe, admirable as had been his conduct of the troops in the hour of battle, was wanting when the battle was over. He agreed to an armistice, at

Losses on either side.

The British success not followed up.

first for three days, and afterwards indefinitely prolonged, being made terminable at thirty hours' notice, which included the whole line of the Niagara frontier. The Americans were given breathing time instead of being kept on the run, and the military results of the fight on Queenston Heights, though not its political consequences, were confined to the gains and losses of the day.

Sheaffe agrees to an armistice.

Van Rensselaer's dispatch told the plain unvarnished truth about this battle. 'The victory was really won, but lost for the want of a small reinforcement. One third part of the idle men might have saved all.' On this 13th of October the citizen soldier was seen at his very best and at his very worst. There was equally good fighting material on either side of the Niagara river, but, while the spirit and discipline of the Canadian militia were beyond all praise, those qualities were absolutely non-existent on the American side. The reasons are not far to seek. The citizen soldier is at his best when he has his back to the wall, fighting for his home; when he has at his shoulder to steady him a good type of trained regular soldier; and when the general in command is something more than a general, personally attracting the sentiment and patriotism of those who are under his lead. All these conditions were present on the Canadian side, all were wanting on the American. The Canadian militia were repelling what was in their eyes wanton invasion of their country. The invaders had in past years driven them out of their old homes, and were now endeavouring to overrun the land where they had found refuge and again taken root. The American guns from over the river were battering the village of Newark, which was the birthplace of the liberties of Upper Canada. For the settlers of Ontario, if they valued, as they did value, the British connexion, if they did not wish to have their infant national existence blotted out, resistance in every possible form was the only possible alternative. To them it was a matter of life and death. To the Americans it was otherwise. The militia who served under Van Rensselaer hailed mainly from New York state; and many of

The citizen soldiers on either side.

them may well have shared the opposition to the war, which was so much in evidence in that state. But, even if this were not so, even if all were of the number that clamoured to be led across into Canada, it was one thing to make a triumphant raid over the frontier, and another to fight to the death in order to secure a foothold at a particular point in the enemy's country. Their homes were not in danger, they might well live to fight another day. As the British guns dealt havoc among the boats, as the wounded were brought back telling the tale of stubborn resistance, of suffering and loss, it is not wonderful that their general found (to quote his own words) that 'the ardour of the unengaged troops had entirely subsided'.

The value of the trained soldier.

The occasion was one when the unquestioning discipline of trained regular soldiers would have supplied what was wanting in undisciplined militia. There were regular soldiers in the American ranks, but most of them that were available were already presumably fighting on Queenston Heights, and the American regulars had not the tradition, or the discipline, or the officers of the British army. For thirty years their only training ground had been Indian border wars, while campaign after campaign, wherever fighting was to be done in the world, had been seasoning the British army, indirectly leavening even those regiments which had not taken part in all the historic fights. Just before the battle of Queenston, there had been an approach to riot or mutiny in the two companies of the 49th stationed at that place; yet, when the crisis came, they were two steady, hard-fighting companies of a first-class British regiment, which had been led and trained by Brock; and, with the 41st, they gave to the defenders of the frontier a small nucleus of professional soldiers, who could be most admirably supplemented, though not replaced, by militia.

But regulars and militia do not always work together shoulder to shoulder, as they did on this particular occasion; and here may be traced the personal influence of Brock. It is absolutely inconceivable that, if Brock had

been in charge of the American army, so lamentable a collapse would have taken place. It is equally difficult to believe that if Van Rensselaer, still less if Brigadier-General Smyth, had been given the keeping of the Canadian frontier, any stand at all would have been made. For nothing is more admirable in the story than the way in which the small force of men, who were guarding the thirty miles of the Niagara river on the British side, were distributed so that one detachment could support another; or the way in which militia and regulars co-operated in giving and receiving support. This was due partly to Brock's undoubted military skill, partly to his intimate knowledge of the land and its people, and to the magnetism of his personal character. Not a few good commanders, trained in the regular army and experienced in campaigns in which only regular soldiers have been employed, are found wanting when called upon to lead mixed forces. Underrating the value of irregular levies, and letting it be seen that they underrate them, they are unable to use them to the best advantage. Brock was not one of these. The years that he had spent in Canada, his experience in civil as well as military administration, coupled with his unaffected patriotism and rare generosity of character, had produced the effect that all men worked together under his lead. Soldiers of the line, Canadian settlers, Western and Mohawk Indians, all were at one when following Brock. In the words of Beverley Robinson, written the day after Brock fell, he was the 'general who had led our little army to victory, whose soul was wrapped up in our prosperity, and whose every energy was directed to the defence of our country'[1]. His loss to Canada was incalculable, and yet in a certain sense it was a gain.

Influence of Brock.

In 1816, a memorial coin was struck bearing the superscription of 'Sir Isaac Brock, the hero of Upper Canada'. This gives a clue to the real importance in Canadian history of the fight for Queenston Heights. On a reduced scale, and in inverted fashion, this little battle, for the numbers

Historical and political importance of the battle of Queenston Heights.

[1] *Life of Sir John Beverley Robinson*, p. 38.

engaged were small, recalls in some of its leading features the more famous fight on the Plains of Abraham. We have on either occasion the landing from the river in early dawn, ascent of the heights by a path unguarded or insufficiently guarded. We have the leader of the British force on both occasions killed on the field of battle, Brock being, like Wolfe, before and after death the idol of his army. We have the assailants of the heights in both cases given ample time to establish their position, and the main force opposing them brought up from a distance, for, as Montcalm had to bring his troops from the Beauport lines below Quebec, so Sheaffe had to march his men from Fort George. The issue on the second occasion was reversed, and the invaders were defeated; but there was a touch of similarity in the main outlines of the two battles, and the setting of the later fight was sufficiently picturesque and dramatic, the crisis was sufficiently grave, to give to Upper Canada, in the battle on Queenston Heights and in the death of Brock, the memory of a national achievement and of a special hero. All this was to the good for the making of a nation, widening and enriching its history. From this date onward the interest in Canadian story no longer ended with the twin deaths of Wolfe and Montcalm, where the river of Canada flows by the rock of Quebec; for far up on the same water-way, another landmark, the monument to Brock, overlooking the gorge of Niagara, told and tells of a good fight and a noble death in the Province of Upper Canada.

Brigadier-General Smyth

After the battle of Queenston, Brigadier-General Smyth succeeded Van Rensselaer in command of the American forces on the Niagara frontier, his head quarters being at or near Buffalo. He signalized his appointment by two ridiculous proclamations. The first was dated November 10, and addressed to the 'Men of New York', attributing the disasters which had befallen the armies of Hull and Van Rensselaer to the fact that 'the commanders were popular men, destitute alike of theory and experience in the art of war'. The second, dated November 17, was

addressed to 'The soldiers of the army of the centre'. By this latter date he had nearly completed his preparations for invasion, having employed the armistice in building boats or bringing them overland from Lake Ontario. Accordingly, on November 19, he gave notice of termination of the armistice; and on the 26th, by his own account, he was ready to carry out the orders of his government to cross over into Canada with 3,000 men at once. According to the report of one of his principal officers, General Porter[1], he had at Black Rock, on November 27, 4,500 effective men, partly regulars, partly volunteers or militia from New York, Pennsylvania, and Baltimore, and boats enough to carry across the river 3,550 men.

prepares to invade Canada above the Falls of Niagara.

Immediately on receiving notice that the armistice was at an end, Sheaffe, on November 21, ordered the batteries at Fort George to open fire on Fort Niagara. The fire was hotly returned against Fort George and the village of Newark, the bombardment continuing through the day. Sheaffe's object was to keep the Americans occupied at the lower end of their line, for he knew well that it was at the upper end, above the falls, that any real attack would be made. Here the defenders of Canada were very few. The line of defence began at Fort Erie, where Major Ormsby commanded a small party of the 49th, supplemented by some men of the Newfoundland regiment, making 130 in all. From this point, for sixteen or seventeen miles to Chippawa, where the officer in general charge of the troops above the falls, Lieutenant-Colonel Cecil Bisshopp,

Disposition of the British troops above the Falls.

[1] Smyth's official report mentions two men of the name of Porter, one Colonel Porter of the artillery, the other Mr. P. B. Porter, contractor's agent, 'who was to pilot the enterprise.' He goes on to say of the latter, 'it has been in the power of the contractor's agent to excite some clamour against the course pursued [i.e. the abandonment of the crossing]; he finds the contract a losing one, at this time, and would wish to see the army in Canada, that he might not be bound to supply it.' This contractor's agent was identical with General Peter B. Porter, who was at the beginning of the war Quarter-Master-General of the state of New York, and was in command of the New York Volunteers. He published his own account of the proceedings, and he and Smyth had a Pickwickian duel on Grand Island.

was stationed, small detachments were placed at intervals along the bank of the river. Rather over a mile below Fort Erie, immediately opposite Black Rock, two companies of Canadian militia watched the ferry; a little further down the river, two and a half miles from Fort Erie, a post called the Red House was held by a handful of the 49th and a few artillery-men with two light guns. Close by were two single gun batteries. A mile further on again was another small party of the 49th; and lower down again, where, at five miles distance from Fort Erie, the Chippawa road was carried over a stream called Frenchman's Creek, the light company of the 41st watched the bridge. Then, at a longer interval, there was another detachment of militia; and finally a few regulars and militia held Chippawa.

Two parties of Americans cross the river.

Between two and three o'clock on the morning of November 28, two parties of Americans landed on the Canadian side. They were intended to clear the way for the passage of the main army. One party was to overpower the guns at and near the Red House, the second was to destroy the bridge over Frenchman's Creek and cut the communication with Chippawa. The first party, consisting of regulars and sailors, after being fired upon by the Canadians at the ferry, landed lower down near the Red House. Their first attacks were repulsed; but, making a détour and being mistaken in the darkness, it was said, for British troops, they overpowered the defenders, carried the position, and took possession of the two guns at the house, and the two at the neighbouring batteries. There was much confusion in the night, the different British detachments moving up and down the bank, unable to distinguish friend from foe, and the Americans becoming divided with the result that some of them recrossed the river with their wounded and some British prisoners, and about thirty others, including the commander, remained on the Canadian side and were taken prisoners lower down the river when daylight came. Meanwhile the second party, or some of them, landed near Frenchman's Creek, and

They carry the position at the Red House,

and attack the position

after some fighting reached the bridge, damaged but failed to destroy it, and on the approach of reinforcements recrossed to the American shore. With daylight troops came up from Chippawa, followed a little later by a party of Indians; another American detachment, which attempted to land, was beaten back; the whole position on the British side was reinstated, and the dismounted guns were recovered. In proportion to its numbers the small British force had suffered severely from the night's work, for the losses in killed, wounded, and prisoners amounted to nearly one hundred, the 49th being the principal sufferers; but the Americans also lost heavily and they had not attained their object.

at French-man's Creek.

Repulse of the Americans.

The proceedings on their side were to have been preliminary to a general embarkation, and a general embarkation of some kind took place, resulting in a parade along the American shore. General Smyth's dispatch runs: 'The troops then embarked, moved up the stream to Black Rock, without sustaining loss from the enemy's fire. It was now the afternoon, and they were ordered to disembark and dine.' Coincidently with this display, Smyth sent across a flag of truce to Colonel Bisshopp proposing that, as the latter had seen 'a part of the hourly increasing force' of the Americans, he should surrender Fort Erie 'to spare the effusion of blood'. The proposal was rejected, and no more blood was shed that day. Smyth spent the next day—the 29th—in preparations, and gave orders that a fresh attempt should be made to cross at 8 o'clock on the morning of the 30th. His officers took exception to crossing in broad daylight in the face of the British batteries which were now in order again, and he agreed to another day's adjournment with a view to embarking before daybreak on December 1, and crossing some miles lower down the river, in order to march direct on Chippawa, and, after taking it, to advance to Fort George. Between three and four in the morning the embarkation began. When daylight broke, there were some 1,500 men in the boats, and others still on the shore, some

Further abortive attempt to cross, and the campaign ended.

of whom refused to embark. Smyth then, by his own account, called a council of his officers to consider whether the crossing should be attempted, and, in accordance with their advice, countermanded the movement, and announced that the attempt to invade Canada would not be made until the army was reinforced. 'A scene of confusion ensued', so Porter tells us, 'which it is difficult to describe, about 4,000 men without order or restraint discharging their muskets in every direction.' On the next day a 'committee of the patriotic citizens of the Western counties of New York' not unreasonably took General Smyth to task for this miserable fiasco. In his reply he reminded them that 'the affair at Queenston is a caution against relying on crowds who go to the banks of Niagara to look at a battle as on a theatrical exhibition', and this much he had to say for himself; but he might have added that he had done more than any one else to turn war into a burlesque. At any rate his countrymen felt that he had made fools of them; and, when he wound up his official report to his government by asking permission to visit his wife and children whom he had not seen for fourteen months, the authorities met his wishes by dispensing with his services altogether.

This was the end of the year's campaigning above Lake Ontario. The Americans were wretchedly led, and the militia and volunteers do not seem to have made up their minds whether they wanted to fight or whether they did not. Nor had anything been achieved lower down on the Canadian frontier. On Lake Ontario, whose extreme length from west to east is not far short of 200 miles, neither the British nor the Americans had, during 1812, much strength in shipping; but before the close of the season the Americans had the preponderance. On the northern shore of the lake the two principal Canadian settlements were York or Toronto, and Kingston. York, near the western end of the lake, over against the mouth of the Niagara river, at some thirty to thirty-five miles distance across the water, had not yet suffered from the war, but

The relative positions on Lake Ontario.

York.

at the other end of the lake Kingston had already been partially blockaded by American vessels. Kingston was at the time the most populous settlement in Upper Canada, and its name, which had supplanted the earlier names of Cataraqui and Fort Frontenac, bore witness to the coming of the United Empire Loyalists. It was the main British naval dépôt on the lake, though there was shipbuilding too at York, which place Simcoe had marked out as the future naval arsenal of Lake Ontario. La Salle, in bygone days, had chosen the site of Kingston for his Fort Frontenac. The town stands on the northern shore of the outlet of the St. Lawrence, where it flows out of Lake Ontario and takes its course amid the Thousand Islands. In a recess of the American shore, almost immediately opposite, with Wolfe Island intervening, was the American naval base at Sackett's Harbour, only about twenty-six miles distant from Kingston in a direct line, but some thirty-five miles distant by the navigable channels. Here Isaac Chauncey, the American commodore, was busy constructing and equipping a fleet to command the lake and intercept communication by water between Upper and Lower Canada. Of all points on the frontier Sackett's Harbour was the most dangerous to Canada. Brock, it is said, had been anxious to strike at it immediately on his return from Detroit, but the armistice which Prevost made with Dearborn checkmated his plans. Not that Prevost was unmindful of the supreme importance of keeping open the water-ways of Canada. Dispatch after dispatch from him referred to the exertions which were being made by the Americans to gain ascendency on the lakes, and to the necessity of making counter-preparations. In November, 1812, we find him suggesting that the marine on the lakes should be placed under Admiralty control, and that proper officers should be appointed from England to take charge of naval matters in Canada. At the same time the Home government, in their turn, were writing that every exertion should be made to keep naval superiority on the lakes, and promised that in the spring 200 sailors, with officers

Kingston.

Sackett's Harbour.

Isaac Chauncey.

Prevost urges the importance of gaining command of the lakes.

Chauncey commands Lake Ontario at the end of 1812.

in proportion, should be sent out. Meanwhile, however, Sackett's Harbour was left almost unmolested, and Chauncey, in the middle of November, was able to report that he had driven a British ship, the *Royal George*, into the inner harbour at Kingston under the guns of the batteries, that he had secured command of the lake, and could transport troops and stores to any part of it without risk of attack.

Raids on the banks of the Upper St. Lawrence.

Below Kingston, on the St. Lawrence, nothing transpired in the year 1812 beyond small raids and counter-raids. In September, a party of Americans crossed the river about twenty miles below Kingston, and attacked and looted two or three houses then standing at Gananogue, which is now a little town visited by tourists to the Thousand Islands. Lower down on the river, early in October, an abortive attempt was made from Prescott, on the Canadian shore, to cross and attack the fort at Ogdensburg, an important American position. In the early morning of October 23, a small band of Canadians, holding the Indian village of St. Regis, was surprised and overpowered by a stronger party of Americans, who came from a post some miles to the east, French Mills on the Salmon river. A month later, the American garrison at this latter place were in turn surprised and taken. These two last little incidents occurred on the southern side of the St. Lawrence, St. Regis standing where the 45th parallel of north latitude meets the river. For many miles eastward from this point, under the treaty of 1783, the 45th parallel formed already at that date, as it still forms, the international boundary, and here the Canadians had no natural frontier to defend. Consequently, from St. Regis at one end, to the Yamaska river beyond the Richelieu at the other, a regular cordon of outposts was established, covering the possible routes of American advance from Lake Champlain against Montreal. These posts were held by Canadian voltigeurs and militia under Major de Salaberry; and, when the Americans were reported to be advancing, a strong force of 1,900 men, of

Cordon of Canadian outposts across the route from Lake Champlain.

whom the majority were regulars, was brought across the St. Lawrence from Montreal and stationed at a place named Laccadie, between St. John's on the Richelieu river and La Prairie, directly blocking the crossing to Montreal. Two additional regiments of the line, it may be noted, had reached Canada in the course of the summer, the 103rd, and a battalion of the 1st Royal Scots, the latter having come from the West Indies.

Dearborn at Plattsburg.

Dearborn, the American Commander-in-chief, and his army had, in the meantime, moved up from Greenbush to Plattsburg on the western side of Lake Champlain towards its northern end, where he established his head quarters; and by the middle of November the van of his force had advanced further north to the village of Champlain, which was close to the boundary line. On the Canadian side of the boundary was the little village of Odelltown, and behind it was a stream called the Lacolle, running into the Richelieu. Here there was a blockhouse and a picket of Canadians, who were attacked on the early morning of November 20 by a strong detachment of Americans. The latter crossed the stream in two parties and took the post; but the defenders escaped, and in the darkness the Americans fired on each other, and finally, on the approach of reinforcements on the Canadian side, retreated, having done more damage to themselves than to the enemy. Dearborn then concluded that no more could be done during the remainder of the season, and his troops went into winter quarters.

Skirmish on the Lacolle river.

American successes at sea.

While the Americans during 1812 had been uniformly unsuccessful on land, they had, on a small scale, an almost uninterrupted series of successes at sea. In themselves these sea-fights were of no great importance, as they were all duels between single ships, but their moral effect was considerable. Since Trafalgar the English had deemed themselves invincible on the ocean, and when news came that one King's ship after another had been forced to strike her colours, there was more sense of humiliation than if greater disasters had befallen the British arms on land.

The leading American naval officer at the beginning of the war was Commodore Rodgers, whose flag-ship was the *President*. This ship was one of three very powerful frigates, well equipped, well manned, and well handled, which did admirable service for their country during the war. The other two frigates were the *Constitution* and the *United States*. The *President* was the ship, and Rodgers was the captain, concerned in the fight with the British vessel *Little Belt* which preluded the war; and the *Little Belt* was at the time carrying dispatches for another British ship, the *Guerrière*, which was subsequently taken by the Americans. The *President*, in turn, though Rodgers was no longer commanding her, was captured towards the close of the war, in January, 1815, being the only one of the three frigates which fell into British hands.

The three American frigates.

Immediately after the declaration of war, Rodgers, on June 21, 1812, set sail with a small squadron from New York to intercept a British merchant fleet which was being convoyed home from the West Indies. The cruise was barren of results. The squadron had a running fight with a British frigate, the *Belvidera*, chased her into Halifax, and after scouring the North Atlantic came back to Boston with half a dozen insignificant prizes. On August 13, a small British warship, the sloop *Alert*, was taken by the American ship *Essex*; and on the 19th of that month the *Constitution*, one of the three fighting American frigates, captured the *Guerrière*. The *Guerrière* was a ship which had been taken from the French in 1806. She was inferior to the *Constitution* in weight, power of guns, and number of crew. The result of a fight which lasted, according to different accounts, from half an hour to two hours, was that her masts went by the board, owing partly to the accuracy of the American fire, partly to the rottenness of the timber; and, with many of her crew killed and wounded, she surrendered, a hopeless wreck, to the *Constitution*. The British loss in men was heavy, the American loss was trifling. The captain of the *Constitution*, Isaac Hull, more competent and more fortunate than the

Capture of the British ship *Guerrière*,

American general of that name, reported that the *Guerrière* 'had been totally dismasted and otherwise cut to pieces, so as to make her not worth towing into port'. The British captain's evidence was to the same effect, and on the day after the fight the ship was blown up. The court-martial, which honourably acquitted Dacres, the British captain, found that the disaster to the *Guerrière* was due to 'the accident of her masts going, which was occasioned more by their defective state than from the fire of the enemy'. The next incident was the capture of the British sloop of war *Frolic*, on October 18, by the American ship *Wasp*, both vessels being retaken about two hours later on the same day by the British battleship *Poictiers*. On October 25, the British frigate *Macedonian*, not an old ship like the *Guerrière* but one of the best of her class, was encountered in the North Atlantic by the *United States*, and, after having a third of her crew killed or wounded, struck her colours and was taken into port. The court-martial on the British captain honourably acquitted him, but found that 'previous to the commencement of the action, from an over anxiety to keep the weather gauge, an opportunity was lost of closing with the enemy'. In plain words, the guns of the American ship outranged those of the *Macedonian*. The year closed with yet another naval success for the Americans. The *Constitution*, under a new captain, fell in with the British frigate *Java* on December 29, off the coast of Brazil. The *Java* was bound for the East Indies, with the Governor of Bombay and various supernumerary officers and seamen on board. She fought hard, her captain was mortally wounded, and her casualties amounted to between one-third and one-half of her crew. When she struck her colours she was a complete wreck, and, after the prisoners had been removed, was burnt.

and of the *Macedonian*

and *Java*.

In all these three frigate actions there was the same story to tell; the *Guerrière*, the *Macedonian*, the *Java*, were overmatched by the more powerful American vessels; and writers from that time to this have been at pains to

British excuses for the naval defeats.

count up the number of tons and guns and men, in order to prove that the English in each case only succumbed to superior force. But war is a matter of business, not of knight-errantry; and, if the matter is worth pursuing at all, such apologies are really a condemnation of the British case and a justification of the American. There was something childish, alike in the excuses which were made for the British defeats, that the American frigates were not frigates at all, but battleships, and so forth, and in the challenges which were issued from one ship to another on either side to meet in single combat. There seemed to be a sort of feeling, which has been perpetuated in subsequent accounts of the war, that it was hardly playing the game if one ship was attacked by more than one; and, when there was a naval duel, it was held to be an adequate apology for defeat that the victor was the more powerful. The one thing in war is to crush the enemy, and the most obvious way of achieving this object is to make certain of attacking with superior force. Yet we read that Captain Dacres, for instance, of the *Guerrière*, before he lost his ship, had sent a sort of challenge to the *President*, or any similar frigate, to meet him, as he termed it, *tête-à-tête*; and, when a sister ship to the *President* defeated him, it turned out, and the fact was held to exculpate him, that the masts of his own ship were rotten.

Spasmodic character of the war in its earlier stages.

These naval fights illustrate the spasmodic character of the war of 1812 in its earlier stages. To a great extent on land, to a greater extent on sea, it consisted of a series of more or less isolated episodes. While the continent of Europe was a theatre of war organized on a vast scale under the greatest captains of modern history, in the west there was a side play, in which men of English race had a succession of rounds with each other in a kind of prize-fight. Only in Canada itself was there an infant people learning to stand up steadily and to fight for its existence; and Canada only learnt its lesson through Brock's example and Brock's successes. 'The want of union,' he wrote to his brothers on September 3, 1812, 'was nearly losing

this province without even a struggle.' But the sea-fights tell more than this. Since the days of Nelson and Trafalgar, and in a curious manner in consequence of Nelson and Trafalgar, the British navy had deteriorated. Trafalgar had destroyed opposition to Great Britain on the sea. Thenceforward British ships and British sailors were concerned mainly in subsidiary operations, in blockading, in convoying, in supplementing the land armies. Ships were detached here and there; there was little serious fighting; discipline, gunnery, and seamanship were no longer perpetually kept, in face of organized hostile fleets, at the highest possible point of perfection. At the same time, the memory of Nelson, who always attacked and always won, led every captain of every British ship to imagine that his only duty was to attack at whatever odds, and that the attack must necessarily succeed. Meanwhile the Americans, having very few ships, made the most of them, and taught the British commanders of the day the very salutary lesson that they should not despise their antagonists. In doing so they were largely helped by deserters from the British navy. It is not pleasant to read that the British prisoners taken on the defeated ships recognized old comrades among their captors, and that the British courts of inquiry found it necessary to express their appreciation of the fact that the surrendered crews did not accept the inducements which were held out to them to join the enemies of their country. But the truth was that many years of war, and the press-gang system, had given to Great Britain a large number of reluctant sailors; the impressment of American citizens was one of the charges brought against her by the government of the United States; and, under the conditions of life on seaboard in the early days of the nineteenth century, the ties of allegiance may well have been held lightly by many men who had been born under the British flag but, unrelieved by the excitement of war and victory, had suffered at the hands of unwise commanders.

Deterioration of the British navy.

Desertions from the British navy.

The impression which was made on English minds by the

The Duke of Wellington on the sea-fights.

repeated American successes at sea in the year 1812, was bluntly expressed in a letter which the Duke of Wellington wrote to Marshal Beresford on February 6, 1813, in the following terms: 'I have been very uneasy about the American naval successes. I think we should have peace with America before the season for opening the campaign in Canada, if we could take one or two of these d—d frigates.'[1]

[1] *Wellington's Despatches* (Gurwood), 1838 edition, vol. x, p. 92.

CHAPTER II

1813

On December 29, 1812, the Legislature of Lower Canada met again, and sat till February 15 following. Prevost, in his opening address, referred to the successes gained in the late campaign, as well as to the Duke of Wellington's victories in the Peninsula; and the Assembly, in a patriotic reply, rejoiced 'that the campaign has terminated without the effusion of blood, without loss of territory, and without interruption to the most important habits of peace by a recourse to martial law'. They ascribed that happy termination 'to the energetic, yet mild and conciliating, measures of your Excellency, to the devotion of His Majesty's Canadian subjects, and to the rightful cause of a beloved Sovereign'. The reference to the bloodless nature of the campaign obviously held true only of Lower Canada. The subject of martial law came up again in the course of the session, and it was made evident that any attempt to proclaim martial law would meet with the strongest opposition; nor was revision of the militia laws, though recommended by the Governor-General, carried into effect. On the other hand, liberal supplies were voted for carrying on the war; new import duties were imposed; and the act for the issue of army bills to meet the special requirements of the crisis and the want of sufficient specie in Canada for that purpose, which had been passed in the preceding year, was renewed, and the maximum limit of the issue was increased.

Meeting of the Legislature of Lower Canada.

Sheaffe, who was created a baronet for his services in the battle on Queenston Heights, took over the administration of Upper Canada upon the death of Brock. He called the Legislature together at York on February 25, 1813, and prorogued it on March 13. The proceedings were harmonious; the acting Lieutenant-Governor and the

Meeting of the Legislature of Upper Canada.

legislators congratulated each other on past successes; and the Militia Acts were amended so as to facilitate the incorporation of new bodies of militia and the appointment of officers. Small bounties were voted to encourage voluntary service in the militia; and, as far as the limited resources of the province would allow, every effort was made to find funds for the war and to strengthen the hands of the Executive in carrying it on. Nor was Brock forgotten, for an address was presented to the Prince Regent, asking that a grant of waste lands in Ontario might be made to the family of the dead general, in order to perpetuate his name in the province for which he had given his life. Meanwhile, before this short session was held, and in the depth of winter, there had already been hard fighting on the western frontier.

The forts on the Maumee river.

After the capture of Detroit, Colonel Procter, who had been left in charge of this end of Canada, and of the territory of Michigan, which had been declared to be annexed, sent an expedition in September, 1812, up the Maumee river. This river was the line of advance for the men of Kentucky and Ohio against Detroit and Amherstburg. At its head, where two streams, the St. Joseph and St. Mary, combine to form the Maumee about sixty-five miles from its outlet into Lake Erie, and where there was a portage to the Wabash river, stood the American Fort Wayne in what is now the state of Indiana. At the present day, a large town stands on its site, bearing the same name. Lower down, in the present state of Ohio, at the junction of the au Glaize river with the Maumee, was another fort, or the remains of a fort, known as Fort Defiance. Lower down again came the Miami rapids, where there had been forts already, and where Fort Meigs was shortly to be built, whence there was uninterrupted navigation to Lake Erie.

Abortive British expedition against Fort Wayne.

The objective of the expedition was Fort Wayne; but when Major Muir of the 41st, who was in command—the same officer who had commanded at the fight at Maguaga—arrived within striking distance, he found that the place was too strongly held to justify attack, and that he him-

self was in danger of counter-attack from superior numbers. It was said that Procter, under Brock's instructions, had intended that the expedition should start at an earlier date, before the Americans after Hull's defeat had made adequate preparations for defence, but that Prevost, while engaged in negotiating for an armistice with the American government, had repressed any forward movement until it was too late to achieve success. In any case the expedition came to nothing, and the Americans set themselves to overawe the Indians, and made plans for retaking Detroit and capturing Fort Malden at Amherstburg in a winter campaign.

General Harrison.

Their commander, in succession to Hull, was General Harrison, whose reputation rested on his victory over the Indians at the Tippecanoe river, in 1811. At the beginning of January, having again harried the Indians in the regions which are now included in the states of Ohio and Indiana, by the usual methods of burning their villages and destroying their supplies, Harrison was ready to advance against Procter's garrisons on the Detroit frontier. The American army was divided into two wings; one wing was on the upper reaches of the Maumee, the other on the line of the Sandusky river, which flows into the inlet of Lake Erie known as Sandusky Bay, about thirty miles east of the mouth of the Maumee. About ten or eleven miles up the Sandusky river was Lower Sandusky, where there was a fort known, either at the time or very shortly afterwards, as Fort Stephenson. At Upper Sandusky, about thirty-seven miles higher up the river, General Harrison had, at the beginning of the year, fixed his camp. General Winchester was in charge of the troops on the Maumee; and the plan was that the two forces should concentrate at the Miami rapids, about thirty-one miles distant from Lower Sandusky, and from that point advance on Amherstburg and Detroit. In accordance with these arrangements, Winchester moved forward down the Maumee from his camp a little below the confluence of the au Glaize with that river, and con-

American advance against Detroit and Amherstburg.

centrated his troops at the Miami rapids by January 10. At about thirty-five miles distance from the rapids and about half-way to Detroit[1], to which a trace had been opened up by Hull, stood Frenchtown, on the northern bank of the au Raisin river, which was held by some fifty men of the Canadian militia under Major Reynolds, and a larger party of Indians. The French inhabitants of the village seem to have been friendly to the Americans and in dread of the Indians, and to have sent a message to Winchester, in consequence of which, without waiting for instructions from Harrison, he ordered a strong detachment of his force under Colonel Lewis to advance and take the place. Leaving the rapids on January 17, Lewis reached on that evening a point on the shore of the lake, which is called in his dispatch Presque Isle; and, starting early on the following morning, about three o'clock in the afternoon attacked Reynolds, drove him out of the village, and compelled him to retreat to Brownstown, about eighteen miles distant. He then encamped his troops on the northern outskirts of the village, the side on which attack might be expected. On hearing of this success Winchester, on January 19, moved forward himself with reinforcements, and took up his own quarters on the southern side of the river, about three-quarters of a mile distant from Lewis's encampment. By the evening of the 20th he had brought most of his force from the rapids to Frenchtown, and on the same day Harrison had reached the rapids from Sandusky.

They occupy Frenchtown on the au Raisin river.

When Colonel Procter heard of what had happened, he took immediate steps to attack Winchester and regain Frenchtown. The news reached him at Amherstburg on the early morning of the 19th; and on that day and on the 20th he carried across the frozen Detroit river to Brownstown nearly all his available troops, his force, when united to Reynold's party, amounting to rather over 1,000 all told, about half of whom were Indians. He took with

Procter marches out to attack the Americans.

[1] Procter's dispatch makes Frenchtown twenty-six miles from Detroit, but the distance is rather greater.

him, too, three or four small guns. Winchester's army seems to have numbered about 1,000 white men, so that the two opposing forces were fairly equal. On the 21st Procter advanced, and reached a point about six miles short of Frenchtown; and, marching again very early on the 22nd, he attacked the enemy at break of day. A Kentucky officer, who was present and escaped, reported that there had been a rumour the night before that Procter would attack before day, but that no preparations were made in consequence; and, though General Winchester's report states that the American picket guards were driven in by the British advance, little or no precaution was apparently taken in the way of outposts; Procter's attack therefore came as a surprise. The American right was in comparatively open ground, but on the left and centre there was good cover among the houses and orchards of the village, and at this point of the line they seem to have thrown up some defences around their camp. Procter attacked with the regulars in the centre and the militia and Indians on the wings. The fighting was heavy, and the British losses were severe, especially where the regulars were exposed to the fire of the American centre fighting behind defences. The issue was decided by the Indians outflanking the Americans on either side and gaining the rear. The American right, the most exposed part of their force, attacked by militia and Indians, was broken and driven across the river, where it was cut to pieces by the Indians. Their left was driven in upon the centre; but, having cover, this section of the army still held out, until General Winchester, who, on the right flank, had been taken prisoner, arranged with Procter, in order to avoid further loss of life and the possibility of wholesale massacre by the Indians, that those of his force who were still fighting should surrender at discretion as prisoners of war. They surrendered to the number of 400; the total number of American prisoners amounted to slightly over 500, including General Winchester and Colonel Lewis; and of the rest of Winchester's army the large majority

The fight at the au Raisin river.

Defeat of the Americans and capture of General Winchester.

were killed, only a few stragglers finding their way back to the Miami rapids. On the British side twenty-four white men were killed and 158 wounded; and, having more prisoners on his hands than he had white men to guard them, Procter retreated immediately, fearing that Harrison with strong reinforcements would arrive in time to retrieve the disaster. Harrison, before the day of the fight, had sent troops to support Winchester, but they had not come up in time. On the day of the fight he heard of Procter's attack and moved forward himself; but, meeting fugitives on the route and learning the truth of what had happened, he collected the various detachments that remained, and fell back to the Portage river between the Sandusky and the Maumee, to cover the movement of stores and artillery from Upper Sandusky to the rapids. Thus both generals expected to be attacked, and both retreated; and while the battle of the au Raisin was a most disastrous blow to the Americans, entirely disconcerting Harrison's plan of campaign, Procter had not the men to follow up his success. The fight, in short, like many others in this war, though it resulted at the moment in a complete victory for one side, a crushing defeat for the other, was none the less an isolated incident instead of one link in a chain of connected operations. 'The zeal and courage of the Indian department,' wrote Procter, 'were never more conspicuous than on this occasion, and the Indian warriors fought with their usual bravery.' There were also the almost inevitable accompaniments of Indian warfare, wholesale slaughter on the battlefield, and some instances of killing of the wounded; but the Indians had in their turn suffered from ruthless treatment at the hands of the American backwoodsmen, and that the stories of their cruelties were exaggerated may be inferred from the following statement in one of General Harrison's dispatches, 'I have seen one man who asserts that he saw General Winchester killed, scalped, and his bowels taken out': whereas General Winchester, safe and sound, a prisoner at Malden, had already, before these

Massacre of Americans by Indians.

words were written, composed an official report of the fight for the benefit of his Government.

General Harrison reorganized his army, brought up artillery and stores, and made good his position at the Miami rapids. On high ground at the foot of the rapids, on the right or southern bank of the river, he built a strong fort, which was christened Fort Meigs, mounted it with guns, and garrisoned it to be the head quarters for future operations against Procter's positions on the Detroit river. At the beginning of March he sent out an expedition from Lower Sandusky to cross the lake on the ice and attack the British vessels lying up at Amherstburg; but the ice had broken up earlier than usual, the detachment was obliged to return, and no action had as yet been taken on his side against Procter, when the latter, who had been promoted to be Brigadier-General for his success at the au Raisin, determined to try to dislodge the Americans at Fort Meigs. That fort stood some twelve miles from the mouth of the Maumee, and between its site and Lake Erie now stands the large town of Toledo. General Harrison held it with some 1,300 men, and a reinforcement of equal number under General Green Clay was moving down the upper reaches of the Maumee to his support.

Harrison builds Fort Meigs at the Miami rapids.

Procter determines to attack the fort.

On April 23, Procter embarked at Amherstburg about 1,000 white troops, including 400 of the much-enduring 41st regiment which fought in every fight at this end of Canada; 1,200 Indians or more under Tecumseh's leadership either accompanied him or joined him at the mouth of the Maumee, and he took with him, it would seem, all his available artillery. In two or three days he had landed his men and guns on the northern or left bank of the Maumee, the opposite side to that on which Fort Meigs stood, and fixed his camp a mile and a half below the fort, where there were the remains of another old fort or camping ground. Heavy rains delayed his proceedings, and it was not until May 1 that he had established a battery higher up the river than his camp, below but

The siege of Fort Meigs.

nearly opposite to the fort, and opened fire. A second battery was added on the following day, but the fire of both was ineffective owing to the strength of the defences of Fort Meigs; and a third battery, which was, on the night of the 2nd or 3rd of May, erected on the opposite side of the river, on the same side as, and immediately below, the fort, also produced little effect. This last battery was guarded by the two flank companies of the 41st, but the main British force was stationed at the camp lower down the river, leaving the batteries on either side somewhat unaccountably open to attack in the face of a strong and well garrisoned fort. It must be presumed that Procter relied, as indeed he had good reason to rely, upon the vigilance of Tecumseh and his Indians. At midnight on May 4, Harrison heard from Clay that the latter was nearing the rapids and was within two hours of the fort. He sent instructions to him to land 800 men on the left or northern bank, to carry the British batteries on that side, spike the guns, and then return to the boats and cross to Fort Meigs. The remainder of the force was to keep on the right side of the river and make its way to the fort through any opposition which the Indians might offer. Clay received his instructions at eight o'clock in the morning; there was delay and confusion among the boats in descending the rapids; but the instructions were carried out, and about nine o'clock between 800 and 900 men under Colonel Dudley were landed on the northern shore above the fort and above the batteries, rushed the batteries, which had been left in the charge of a few artillery-men, and spiked the guns. Instead, however, of returning to their boats in accordance with orders, the victorious Americans remained on the northern shore, part of them held the position at the batteries, and part made a diversion into the woods to skirmish with the Indians. The latter detachment fell into an ambuscade, the former were overpowered by a smaller body of regulars and militia sent by Procter to retake the guns; and the net result was that between 400 and 500 Americans were taken prisoners,

A detachment of Americans carries the British batteries on the left bank of the river,

but is subsequently annihilated.

and only about 150 of the whole force landed on the northern shore made good their escape to the boats. Meanwhile, on the southern shore, Clay and the remainder of his army were attacked by the Indians, but joined hands with a detachment sent out from the fort to meet them; and Harrison ordered a sortie against the British battery on the southern bank, took one of the guns, and carried off some forty men of the 41st as prisoners. The remaining men of the 41st, who were stationed at this point, stiffened up by a small reinforcement of militia and Indians, rallied, retook the battery, and drove the Americans with some loss back into the fort. This ended the fighting and the expedition. Procter had not enough men, nor heavy enough guns to take Fort Meigs. The Indians, having again killed some of the wounded, drifted off with plunder and prisoners to their villages, leaving Procter, according to the wording of his report on the expedition, with 'Tecumseh and less than twenty chiefs and warriors', and causing him to conclude 'that, under present circumstances at least, our Indian force is not a disposable one, or permanent, though occasionally a most powerful aid'. Half the militia, too, had gone off to attend to their farms in the sowing season. The British commander, therefore, having made arrangements for exchange of prisoners, on May 9 broke up his encampment, brought off his guns, and went back to the Detroit river. The total British loss in killed, wounded, and prisoners had not exceeded one hundred. The American loss had been six or seven times heavier, but Fort Meigs had not been taken, and Harrison, with far larger resources than Procter, was better able to bide his time.

Fighting on the right bank of the river.

The siege abandoned.

In his dispatch which has been quoted above, and which was written from Sandwich on May 14, Procter noted with regard to his expedition that 'if the enemy had been permitted to receive his reinforcements and supplies undisturbed, I should have had at this critical juncture to contend with him for Detroit, or perhaps on this shore'. It was a very critical time at this end of Canada. The difficulty of finding men to fight, of transporting them

Procter's difficulties.

when available, and of feeding them either on service or off it, was a constantly growing one. The Indians too had to be humoured and to be fed, and it was absolutely necessary to risk expeditions against the enemy in order to try and cripple him for the time being, and to encourage the native allies of the English. Above all it was necessary to keep Lake Erie open for British vessels.

Procter's expedition against Fort Stephenson.

In two months' time reinforcements of the 41st regiment had reached Procter, and the Indians had gathered again. About July 20, therefore, Procter started once more in the hope of inflicting another blow on Harrison's army. Fort Meigs, and Fort Stephenson at Lower Sandusky, were the two points from which American invasion was to be feared. The former was very strongly held; the latter had only a small garrison, but Harrison himself with a considerable force was not more than ten miles distant, higher up the Sandusky river, at Seneca-town or Fort Seneca. Procter's force consisted of not more than 400 white soldiers, nearly all of the 41st regiment, with a few artillerymen and some six-pounder guns; but at the start he was accompanied by a large concourse of Indians, in three bodies, one of which was commanded by Tecumseh. His first intention was to attack Fort Meigs, but he found that any attempt to take it would be hopeless; and a plan of Tecumseh's for decoying the garrison from behind their defences by firing in the neighbouring woods on the side on which the routes from Sandusky approached the fort, and thereby giving the impression that a detachment of Americans was being entrapped and needed relief, entirely failed in its object. Procter therefore abandoned all hope of success in this quarter; and, while many of the Indians turned back towards home, and others under Tecumseh continued to lie in wait near Fort Meigs or in the swamps which intervened between the Maumee and the Sandusky rivers, he himself with his white troops, and, according to British accounts, not more than 200 Indians, went on to Sandusky Bay and ascended the river in boats to attack Fort Stephenson.

The fort stood on the left or western side of the river. On the land side, outside the main building of the fort, was a ditch, the edges of which were crowned with palisades. The position was a strong one, but the garrison consisted of not more than 160 men, soldiers of the regular American army, and there was only one gun in the fort. The commander, Major Croghan, had therefore been instructed to retire, if possible, upon the appearance of the enemy, destroying the fort; but Procter's advance was so sudden and unexpected that these instructions could not be carried out. Procter reached the place on the evening of August 1, and demanded its surrender; Croghan refused; and, after some firing from the boats, Procter landed his men to cut off the garrison's retreat, and during the night brought his guns into position to effect a breach at the north-western angle of the fort on the side which looked down the river. The guns were too light to make much impression upon the defences, and between four and five in the afternoon of the 2nd, the British commander attempted to storm the place. One party was detailed to attack at the north-western corner, another to make an assault on the upper or southern side. The first party made their way through the outer palisades and into the ditch, but could go no further. The one gun in the fort, which had been masked, opened fire with fatal effect and, supplemented by musketry, made the attack at this point hopeless. After repeated efforts, the stormers were beaten back; the attempt on the southern side was not seriously pressed; and, having suffered about 100 casualties, the British force retreated down the river during the night, leaving some of their killed and wounded behind them.

Fort Stephenson.

Attack on the fort.

A complete failure.

Retreat of Procter.

In a small way it was a bad reverse, a foretaste of greater disasters which were shortly to befall the troops under Procter's command. In sending his report on the action, General Harrison added, 'As Captain Perry was nearly ready to sail from Erie when I last heard from him, I hope that the period will soon arrive when we shall transfer the labouring oar to the enemy, and oblige him to encounter

some of the labours and difficulties which we have undergone in waging a defensive warfare and protecting our extensive frontier against a superior force.' How the labouring oar was transferred, and with what effect the Americans took the offensive, will be told shortly. In the meantime, it will be noticed that Harrison wrote of having been up to that date on the defensive against superior forces. This was not the case, as regards the number of white men. He could command far larger numbers than Procter could bring against him; on the other hand, Procter from time to time had been able to collect strong bodies of Indians to co-operate in his expeditions, and the accounts show that such success as had attended his efforts was largely due to their aid. Wherever Tecumseh was present, Indian skill and fighting power was at its best; and, wherever this chief was personally on the spot, Indian barbarities seem to have been repressed. But he was not always in evidence, and the English, in using the services of Indian allies, had to pay the penalty of being responsible for Indian methods of warfare. In the following October, after the annihilation of Procter's force, a British officer was sent to Harrison from Procter to ask for humane treatment of the British prisoners, and the restoration of their private property and papers. Addressing his answer to General Vincent, then commanding the British force at Burlington Heights, Harrison, in a forcible and temperate letter, commented upon the outrages committed by the Indians who had served with Procter. After referring to 'the tragedy of the river Raisin and that, equally well known, which was acted on the Miami river after the defeat of Colonel Dudley', he gave specific instances of Indian savagery, including murders of women and children, and alleged that these deeds were perpetrated, 'if not in the view of the British commander, by parties who came immediately from his camp and returned to it; who even received their daily support from the King's stores; and who, in fact (as the documents in my possession will show) form part of his army'. He appealed to Vincent to stop the effusion

Merits and defects of the Indian allies of Great Britain.

Indian outrages.

of innocent blood which was the result of the employment of Indians, warning him that the latter were now ready to turn against the English, and that, if the barbarities should be continued, he would 'remove the restrictions which have hitherto been imposed upon those who have offered their services to the United States, and direct them to carry on the war in their own way'. It is true that the Indians had been fighting for their national existence. It is true that the Americans had waged ruthless war against them. With knowledge of what has taken place in later times, where white men have been planted on the confines of militant barbarism, it would be idle to maintain that the Kentuckians did not deal out to the Indians much the same measure of wholesale brutality as the Indians dealt to them. It is true that some of the Indians were fighting shortly afterwards in the American ranks. There is no room for doubt that the reason why Indians were more employed by the English than by the Americans, was not so much any scruple on the part of the Americans, as the plain fact that the English had befriended the Indians and the Americans had not; and there is equally no reason to doubt that the British officers, with whom and nominally under whom they served, were at pains to restrain their excesses. Still, white men are white, and coloured men are coloured. At all times the cruelties of white men against the native races have, wrongly enough, been held more lightly than cruelties inflicted by natives upon white men. That the Indians on the British side had, on occasions, butchered prisoners and non-combatants could not be disproved, nor could the truth of Harrison's words, 'The effect of their barbarities will not be confined to the present generation. Ages yet to come will feel the deep-rooted hatred and enmity which they must produce between the two nations.' This element of Indian warfare was largely responsible for the bitterness with which the war was subsequently waged on the Canadian frontier, the harrying and burning of villages, and the ill-treatment of the settlers. It was equally

responsible for the stern reprisals which the British exacted, and for the legacy of bitter feeling which was the worst result of the war.

The frontier raids, which had begun on the Upper St. Lawrence during the autumn of 1812, continued during the winter, facilitated by the frozen state of the river.

The taking of Ogdensburg.

The chief starting-point for these expeditions on the American side was Ogdensburg in the state of New York. It stands on the St. Lawrence, at the confluence of a stream carrying the combined waters of the Black and the Oswegatchie rivers, some seventy miles below Kingston, and below the long stretch of the St. Lawrence which is known as the Lake of the Thousand Islands. It had already played a considerable part in Canadian history, in the days of New France, and afterwards; and in the preceding autumn an attempt had been made to take it from Prescott, which lies directly opposite on the Canadian side, and at which place, or close by, there was at this time a fort, named Fort Wellington, with a fairly strong British garrison. The attempt failed: and, on the night of February 6, Forsyth, the American commander at Ogdensburg, crossed the St. Lawrence on the ice, and attacked the little Canadian village of Elizabethtown, which was either already, or shortly afterwards, rechristened Brockville in memory of Isaac Brock. It stands about twelve miles above Prescott, had no defences, and hardly any armed defenders. The Americans looted the houses, carried off the stock and some of the inhabitants, and returned with their plunder to Ogdensburg. The commander at Prescott sent Colonel Macdonell of the Glengarry regiment to Ogdensburg to remonstrate against this action, but without effect; and Prevost, having come up to Prescott on February 21, while visiting the outposts on the way to Kingston, was asked by Macdonell, who had just taken over the command of the Prescott garrison, to allow him to make a counter-attack on Ogdensburg. According to Prevost's own dispatch to the Home government, he ordered Macdonell to carry out his intention; but it seems that his

actual instructions were to make a demonstration against the place without hazarding a fight, and his authority for any movement at all appears only to have been secured by representation that otherwise the Americans might intercept his journey to Kingston.

Prevost left early on the morning of the 22nd; and Macdonell instantly, about seven in the morning, set out to cross the frozen river, one and a half miles wide, with a body of about 500 men, including detachments of the 8th regiment of the line, of the Glengarries, of the Newfoundland regiment, and of the militia, with three or four guns. Owing to the state of the ice and the necessity of keeping open order in face of the fire of the enemy, he divided his force into two bodies; the Glengarries and some of the militia formed the right, while the left, under his personal command, stronger in numbers, included the regulars and was accompanied by the artillery. The Americans seem to have also numbered about 500 men. The larger part held a position at or near the village of Ogdensburg, on the eastern or lower side of the Oswegatchie river; the rest were on the other side of that river, where there was an old French fort. At both points there were batteries of artillery. Macdonell's plan was that the Glengarries and the militia with them should hold in check the enemy at or near the fort and intercept their retreat, while he himself with the left column carried the main American position at Ogdensburg village. Some time was taken in crossing the river, and, as the troops neared the American shore, they were exposed in the open to a severe fire from the enemy. Here, too, the snow was deep, and there was difficulty in bringing the guns up the bank. The Glengarries on the right pressed their attack hard, endeavouring to rush the guns which were directly opposed to them; but they were beaten back with some loss, their commander being grievously wounded. On the left, however, Macdonell turned the right of the enemy, took their guns with a bayonet charge, drove them into and out of the village, then halted to breathe his men on the high ground

opposite to and commanding the fort, and called on the fort to surrender. No answer being given, and firing having begun again, he carried another battery, turned its guns on the enemy who still held out, silenced their fire, and carried the fort. The majority of the Americans both from inside and from outside the fort escaped some miles into the woods, whence Forsyth, their commander, dispatched an urgent message for reinforcements, promising that, if 300 men could be sent, 'all shall be retaken, and Prescott too, or I will lose my life in the attempt'; but he was not given an opportunity of retrieving his defeat. Macdonell burned the barracks, two armed schooners, and two gunboats which were frozen in the ice; he carried off some seventy prisoners, eleven guns, including two twelve-pounders which had once belonged to Burgoyne's army, and various military stores; and, with sixty casualties on his own side, he returned at once to Prescott, having given security to this part of the Canadian frontier. The Americans, it may be noted, would probably have suffered heavier loss in escaping to the woods, had not the Indians attached to the Prescott garrison been, as Macdonell tells us, employed on this particular day in another direction.

The American plan of campaign for 1813.

Before this incident had taken place, the American Secretary of War had sent to Dearborn instructions for the coming campaign. The troops on Lake Champlain were to be moved up to Sackett's Harbour, and be replaced by new levies. Four thousand were to be assembled at Sackett's Harbour, and three thousand at Buffalo; and, at the opening of navigation, about April 1, the force at Sackett's Harbour was to be embarked for Kingston with a view to taking that place, its garrison, and the British flotilla wintering in the harbour. They were then to move on to York, to capture the stores there, and a ship which was being built; and finally they were to co-operate with the Buffalo force in reducing Forts George and Erie, and the other British outposts on the line of the Niagara river. In order to conceal the real issues and account for the movement of the troops, Dearborn was to give out that

Sackett's Harbour was threatened, and also that the destination of the two brigades to be brought up from Lake Champlain was not Sackett's Harbour but Niagara. Dearborn, early in March, came to the conclusion that Prevost had collected a large force at Kingston to attack Sackett's Harbour, and wrote in real alarm to his government. The rumour was unfounded, but it seems to have disarranged the plan of campaign, for no attempt was made on Kingston, and it was not until April 25 that Chauncey's squadron sailed out of Sackett's Harbour and made for York, some 150 miles distant, carrying Dearborn and a force of 1,700 men. At this time the Americans had the command of Lake Ontario, for such ships as the British had in being were cooped up at Kingston, just as the American ships on Lake Erie were shut in, while making their preparations, at Erie in the harbour of Presque Isle.

Chauncey and Dearborn sail from Sackett's Harbour to attack York.

In the year 1813, the present great city of Toronto was, as we learn from Beverley Robinson's life, a small village with scarcely 700 inhabitants. Yet, small as it was, it was a large settlement for Upper Canada, though not so populous as Kingston. It was the capital of Upper Canada [1]; the Legislature had lately met there; shipbuilding was in progress, all important for the war; and it is unintelligible why, even allowing for limited resources, Prevost and Sheaffe had not made some provision for defence, and some attempt to provide an adequate garrison. It is the more unintelligible in the light of a dispatch from Sheaffe written from York on April 5, in which he stated that he hoped to return to Fort George in a few days, but, before doing so, to see York placed in a better position than it then was to

York in 1813.

[1] Bouchette in 1815 wrote of York: 'It is very regularly laid out, with the streets running at right angles, and promises to become a very handsome town. The plot of ground marked out for it extends about a mile and a half along the harbour, but at present the number of houses does not greatly exceed three hundred.' (*A Topographical Description of the Province of Lower Canada, with Remarks upon Upper Canada*, &c., by Joseph Bouchette, Esq., Surveyor-General of Lower Canada, London, 1815, 1st edit., p. 606.) Bouchette gives the population in 1815 as 2,500, much higher than Beverley Robinson's estimate of the number in 1813.

Its defenceless state.

resist the attacks which might be expected in the spring, and which would be induced by and directed against a new ship which was building in York harbour. Sheaffe was at York when the expected attack took place, but the fortifications were ill prepared, and the guns half mounted; little seems to have been done in the way of preparation for defence; and, when the American vessels were reported to be on the horizon on the evening of April 26, there were only about 600 white men, including militia and dockyard men, available to meet the attack. This small number would have been smaller still but for the chance that 180 men of the 8th regiment, on their way from Kingston to Fort George, had halted at York on that same evening—an unfortunate coincidence, for they were too few to alter the issue of the following day, and lost heavily in the fighting.

The Americans land and take the town.

At daybreak on the 27th the American squadron was close in at the entrance—the western end of the harbour, but moved on a little further to the westward; and about eight o'clock in the morning, or slightly earlier, the landing of the troops began. Brigadier-General Pike, under General Dearborn, framed the plan of operations, and personally commanded the attack. He had selected as the point of landing the site of an old disused French fort, called in the American dispatches Fort Tarento, which stood on cleared ground on the shore of the lake between two and three miles to the west of York, as York then was. Between this point and the village, with woodland intervening, about one and a half miles from the village, commanding the entrance of the harbour, was the main or western fort; and there were one or two more batteries and blockhouses rather nearer the village [1]. The wind was blowing hard

[1] It is almost impossible to make out from the accounts how many blockhouses or batteries there were, and where the explosion of the magazine took place. Bouchette, in the continuation of the passage quoted in the previous note, writes: 'The garrison is situated to the westward of the town at a mile distance. It consists of barracks for the troops usually stationed here, a residence for the commanding officer, now most frequently occupied by the Lieutenant-Governor of the pro-

from the east, and the Americans were carried somewhat further to the west than had been intended. The landing was in consequence made more difficult, partly because it was not so well covered, as would otherwise have been the case, by the guns of the ships, and partly because the shore was wooded and favoured the defenders. According to American accounts the whole British force under Sheaffe himself was at hand to resist the landing ; but this was not the case. At the moment only a small party of Indians were actually on the spot, a detachment of Glengarries, which should have been there, having been by some confusion marched in a wrong direction. A party of riflemen was first landed under Forsyth, apparently the officer who had commanded at Ogdensburg. There was some skirmishing ; after which the main body under Pike was disembarked, and, when the landing was complete, about ten o'clock, the Americans began their advance towards York, while their ships moved off in the same direction, and directed their fire at close quarters on the forts and batteries at the harbour.

The American force, as they marched forward, were met in the woods by the British troops ; hard fighting ensued ; the men of the 8th lost half their number, their commander was killed, and the whole body was driven back to the fort. At the western fort an explosion took place, causing some forty casualties, and making the place untenable. Further retreat was again inevitable, and Sheaffe resolved to carry

vince, a battery and two blockhouses, which together protect the entrance of the harbour.' The following is a description of Toronto harbour, written in 1806, by George Heriot, author of *Travels through the Canadas*, London, 1807, p. 138 : 'York or Toronto, the seat of government in Upper Canada, is placed . . . near the bottom of a harbour of the same name. A long and narrow peninsula, distinguished by the appellation of Gibraltar Point, forms and embraces this harbour, securing it from the storms of the lake, and rendering it the safest of any around the coasts of that sea of fresh waters. Stores and blockhouses are constructed near the extremity of this point. A spot, called the garrison, stands on a bank of the mainland, opposite to the point, and consists only of a wooden blockhouse and some small cottages of the same material, little superior to temporary huts.'

Sheaffe retreats,

off the few regulars who remained, about 180, including some wounded, to Kingston, burning the new ship, destroying a large part of the naval stores, and leaving the commanders of the militia to negotiate for the surrender of their men and of the little town. He marched his troops in the direction of the Kingston road, and meanwhile the Americans moved on towards the town. As they advanced, or as they were halting near a battery, a large powder magazine blew up, killing or disabling over 200 of their number, including General Pike, who was struck by a large mass of stone as the result of the explosion, and died shortly afterwards. This explosion seems to have been accidental; but the Americans, or some of them, formed the impression that a mine had been designedly sprung upon them, and the loss which they suffered may be taken in part to account for their treatment of the village, of which they took possession in the course of the afternoon, terms of capitulation having been arranged by the officers commanding the militia, assisted by Dr. Strachan, then the Church of England clergyman at York, and afterwards Bishop, and by Beverley Robinson, who was then Attorney-General of Upper Canada. Sheaffe had in the meantime begun his retreat towards Kingston unmolested, and a few miles out from York met the light company of the 8th, on its way, like the preceding companies of that regiment, to Fort George. Thus strengthened he reached Kingston in safety; but his conduct had not been such as to inspire confidence, and though he received a complimentary letter from resident members of the Executive Council in Upper Canada in respect of his work as administrator, he was removed from that position and from the command of the forces in Upper Canada, being transferred to take command of the Montreal district. His place, both in a military and in a civil capacity, in Upper Canada was filled by General de Rottenburg, who took the oaths of office on June 19[1].

and the town capitulates.

Sheaffe relieved of his command.

[1] Sheaffe appears to have deserved to be superseded, but at the same time he was the subject of jealousy and calumny on the part of some of

The British killed and wounded on this 27th of April seem to have numbered about 200, the large majority of whom were regulars. The prisoners, nearly all of whom came under the terms of the capitulation, and nearly all of whom were militia who were put on their parole, numbered about 300. The American casualties, mainly due to the explosion, were between 250 and 300. Under the terms of the capitulation all the public, naval, and military stores were to be immediately given up, and all private property was to be guaranteed. The town was only occupied until May 1, although the ships were weather-bound in the harbour until the 8th. It is difficult to understand why Dearborn and Chauncey did not attempt to hold the place permanently, thereby cutting the British land communications between Kingston and the Niagara frontier, especially as for the time being they had command of the lake. As it was, the enterprise ended, like many others in this war on both sides, in a single raid, effective in doing damage at a particular time and place, and so far, but so far only, it was part of a connected plan of operations. This particular incident left a sore memory in Canada, and embittered the later stages of the war. Whether it was that a party of sailors, or the riflemen who were stationed in the town, and who had already shown their raiding propensities, were out of hand; whether the explosion of the powder magazine had exasperated the comrades of the dead and wounded men; whether the destruction of the half-built ship, and of stores which would otherwise have fallen into the hands of the Americans, gave them real or alleged ground for complaint; or whether it had been determined to exact some kind of reprisal for Indian excesses;—whatever was the cause, the invaders burnt the Parliament buildings with the library and records, and carried off the plate from the church and the books from the town library, some of which Commodore Chauncey, to his officers. See *The Documentary History of the Campaign upon the Niagara Frontier in the year* 1813, pt. I, 1813 (Lundy's Lane Historical Society), pp. 35–9.

The casualties on either side.

Destruction of the public buildings by the Americans.

his credit, subsequently collected and sent back. Nor did they keep their hands off private property. After this discreditable mischief had been wrought, they moved on to the mouth of the Niagara river. There the fighting force on board was landed on the American side at Four Mile Creek.

Chauncey and Dearborn move on to the Niagara frontier.

Chauncey then sailed back to Sackett's Harbour to deposit the wounded and bring up further men and stores; and, when all was ready, on May 27, Fort George, the British head quarters on the Niagara frontier, was attacked in force.

The position on the Niagara.

After the collapse of General Smyth's attempts at invasion at the beginning of December, 1812, there was a long pause in the fighting on the Niagara river. Nothing happened until the following 17th of March, when the British Fort Erie, at the head of the river, which was in charge of Colonel Bisshopp, was violently bombarded from the American batteries on the opposite side, with no result beyond a few casualties. It was in the opinion of Bisshopp's commanding officer, Brigadier-General John Vincent, a mere St. Patrick's Day frolic. Another pause followed this bombardment; but, when May came, the Americans gathered at the lower end of the river for serious fighting. Vincent, who, in the absence of Sheaffe, commanded the British forces on this line, had with him, including both regulars and militia, rather under 2,500 men. Of these, about 1,400 were stationed in or around Fort George, one thousand of whom were regulars, men of the 8th and 49th regiments, the Glengarries, and the Newfoundland regiment.

Falling off of the militia.

The militia gave Vincent cause for anxiety. On May 19 he wrote to Prevost: 'It is with regret that I can neither report favourably of their numbers nor their willing co-operation. Every exertion has been made, and every expedient used, to bring them forward and unite their efforts to those of His Majesty's forces, with but little effect; and desertion beyond all conception continues to mark their indifference to the important cause in which we are now engaged;' but he added an expression of his belief that, when reinforcements came up, the

waverers, who were for the moment overawed by the evidence of American strength, would rally again to the King's flag. Prevost referred to the same subject in a dispatch to Lord Bathurst on May 26. He wrote of 'the growing discontent and undissembled dissatisfaction of the mass of the people of Upper Canada in consequence of the effects of the militia laws upon a population thinly scattered over an extensive range of country, whose zeal was exhausted, and whose exertions had brought want and ruin to the doors of many'. There had been, in consequence, a considerable emigration to the United States whence most of the settlers had originally come, and of those who remained true to Canada many had temporarily deserted to get the seed into the ground on their farms before the short Canadian summer was too far advanced. Prevost had accordingly found it necessary, so he reported, to send up his most seasoned soldiers to the Niagara and Detroit frontiers.

There is nothing in these and similar reports to wonder at, or to make those who read them revise their views of Canadian patriotism. Many of the farmers in the western districts of Upper Canada were comparatively recent settlers from the United States, and therefore sympathizers with the American cause. We find this fact recognized in the instructions given by the American commanders to their troops. The brigade order issued at Sackett's Harbour, just before the expedition against York started, announced that 'The unoffending citizens of Canada are many of them our own countrymen, and the Provinces have been forced into the war'.[1] The remainder, the Canadian Loyalists, could not be expected to serve continuously with the colours. They had to till their farms, or see their families either starve or beg for bread from a government which might not have the bread

[1] *Documentary History of the Campaign upon the Niagara Frontier in the year* 1813, pt. I, 1813, p. 163 (Lundy's Lane Historical Society). At p. 211 of the same volume will be found evidence of disloyalty after the taking of York.

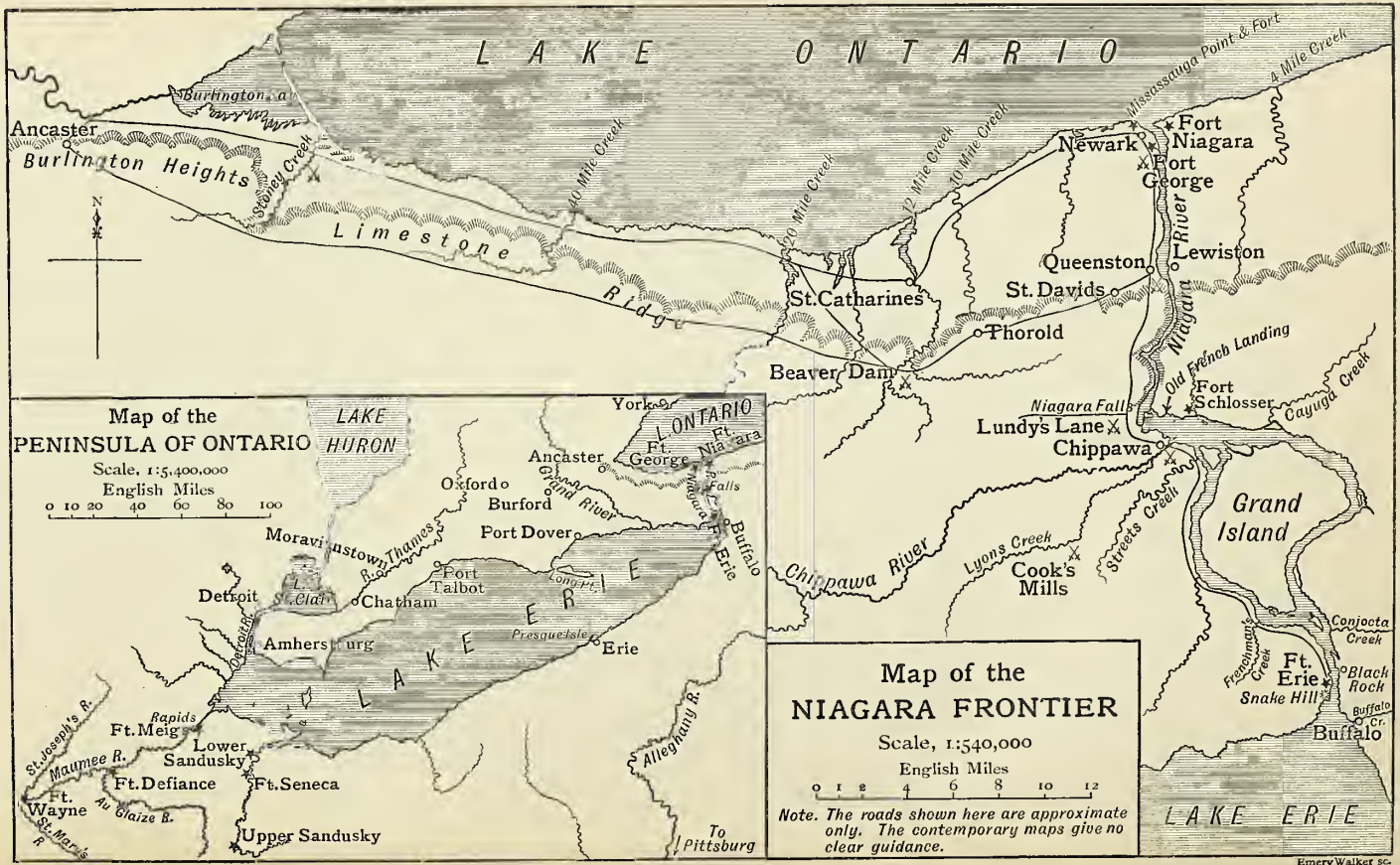
to give. This also the Americans recognized, and it accounted for their devastations in the later stages of the war, when their friends had crossed the border and left the Loyalists behind. Citizen soldiers will rally to a given place at a given time, especially if they know and trust the leader on the spot; but, even when defending their own homes, they must, for the sake of the homes, have intervals in fighting. The volunteer, too, is necessarily more affected by the ups and downs of warfare than the disciplined professional soldier, whose trade is war; and, when Vincent and Prevost wrote, there was much to discourage the colonists of Upper Canada. Their little capital had been taken and its buildings burnt. The American forces were triumphant on land and the American ships on the lake. Brock, whom they had loved and trusted above all men, was dead; Sheaffe, who took his place, had not, after his initial success, shown himself to be in any sense a leader of men; and good subordinate officers could not make up for the want of a general. It was a dark and discouraging time, when the effect of the first victories was spent, and the first enthusiasm had cooled. No wonder there was want of heart in the militia of Upper Canada.

The numbers of Dearborn's army.

The numbers of the Americans who faced Vincent and his little army are variously given. Vincent, in his dispatch, written the day after the battle at Fort George, reported that the whole force was stated to amount to nearly 10,000 men; but this was clearly an over-estimate, and the total number of the land forces does not seem to have exceeded 6,000. Dearborn himself was in command, and with him, amongst others, was General Morgan Lewis, who had charge of the garrison at Fort Niagara.

The British batteries.

Fort George, as has been stated, was between half a mile and a mile to the south of and higher up the Niagara river than Newark, which village, now Niagara on the lake, stood in the angle formed by the mouth of the river and Lake Ontario, but not actually on the shore of the lake. Beyond it, at Missassauga Point, being the



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Emery Walker sc.

extreme point of land formed by the lake and the river, was a lighthouse, near which a twenty-four pounder had been mounted, being one of the guns which had been taken from General Hull at Detroit. The others were in position at Fort George. About half a mile to the west of this lighthouse and of Newark, near the shore of the lake, and near a point called in some accounts One Mile Creek and in others Two Mile Creek, a nine-pounder gun had been placed. This gun and the one near the lighthouse were intended to oppose a landing from the lake.

The attack on Fort George.

Previous to May 27 the defences and outbuildings of Fort George had been weakened by bombardment from the opposite shore. Ammunition, too, was scarce in the fort, and the Americans were able in consequence to make their preparations unmolested. These preparations included sounding of the shore by Chauncey and his sailors on the night of the 26th, preparatory to the work of the coming day. Before daybreak the troops were embarked on the ships and on a large fleet of boats which had been collected for the occasion. Simultaneously, the American batteries opened fire on Fort George, and a little after four o'clock in the morning of the 27th, as the haze lifted, Vincent and his men saw the vessels making towards the lighthouse, but could not judge where the landing would be made. The Americans had planned their enterprise well; and in carrying it out soldiers and sailors co-operated well, the landing of the troops being superintended by Captain Oliver Perry, who was in command of the American naval forces on Lake Erie, and had, on the evening of the 25th, come down from Presque Isle to volunteer his services. Some of the ships commanded the gun at the lighthouse, others covered the landing to the west of the lighthouse, near where the nine-pounder had been placed. The peninsula, which was the scene of the fighting, was a level plateau and could therefore be swept by a cross-fire from the ships' guns, directed at once from the mouth of the river and from the lake. On the other hand, the guns of Fort George, available for repelling an attack from the river, were not of equal use

against an attack from the lake, for the village of Newark intervened. The first Americans to land—according to Dearborn's report about nine o'clock in the morning—included again Forsyth and his riflemen, and were commanded by Winfield Scott. They were met by a small detachment of troops, with a party of Indians; but the landing could not be seriously opposed, for in the words of Vincent's dispatch, 'the fire from the shipping so completely enfiladed and scoured the plains, that it became impossible to approach the beach'. The main force of the Americans then landed, amounting to between 3,000 and 4,000 men with artillery; and to meet them, as they came up the bank from the lake, under cover of skirmishers from the Glengarry and Newfoundland regiments, Vincent drew up his little army in two wings, with a reserve, 'taking up a position between the town, Fort George, and the enemy.'

The left wing consisted of about 500 men, or, when joined by the skirmishers who were falling back, of between 600 and 700 men, about half of whom belonged to the 8th regiment. The right wing, which was on the side of the village and Fort George, had much the same strength, the majority of its soldiers belonging to the 49th regiment, and the wing being under the command of Colonel Harvey, whose name stands high in the annals of this war. The Americans, Vincent's dispatch tells us, advanced 'in three solid columns along the lake bank', their right covered by riflemen, their left by the guns of the ships and the batteries. Their advance, therefore, was from north-west to south-east, and the British troops faced them, the left wing having no cover when it left a small ravine in which it had been posted. This wing, under Colonel Myers[1],

[1] There seems to be some confusion in Vincent's dispatch. He says Colonel Myers 'had charge of the right wing', whereas he was in charge of the left. He also says that later he received information that the enemy 'was making an effort to turn my right flank', whereas a turning movement to intercept the British retreat towards Burlington Heights would be on the American right and the British left, unless American

came into action first, and suffered very heavily. Out of 320 men of the 8th regiment 200 were killed or wounded, and Myers was disabled by several wounds. Harvey came across from the right wing to take Myers's place, and the right wing moved up to support the left. The two wings were combined and fell back in the direction of Fort George. The Americans, after the first fight, reformed and continued their advance. Their riflemen threatened Vincent's communications with Burlington bay at the head of Lake Ontario, which had been marked out as the point to be aimed at in case of retreat; and, seeing that it was hopeless to continue the fight against superior numbers, with the certainty of further heavy losses, Vincent ordered Fort George to be evacuated, the guns to be spiked, and the ammunition to be destroyed, leaving the Americans to take possession of the fort at noon. Then, having sent orders to the British commanders above the falls, from Chippawa to Fort Erie, to abandon their posts and join him with all their forces, he marched his own men up the Niagara river to Queenston; and, striking inland by the road along the high ground, concentrated on that night all the forces on the Niagara frontier at Beaver Dam, near Merriton, where the railway from Hamilton to Niagara now passes under the Welland canal. Beaver Dam was, by the route that he took, fully sixteen miles from the battle-field, and here a dépôt of provisions and ammunition had previously been formed. Here, too, Vincent was joined by two fresh companies of the 8th regiment, who had apparently come up from Kingston, and a small party of sailors under Captain Barclay, on his way to take charge of the British vessels on Lake Erie. Having now 1,600 fighting men under his command, he continued his retreat the next day to Forty Mile Creek, now Grimsby, from which place he wrote his dispatches; and by the evening of the following day, the 29th, he reached Burlington Heights, overlooking the turning-point of the lake,

Vincent abandons Fort George and retreats

to Burlington Heights.

troops had been landed up the river in Vincent's rear to cut the road to Queenston.

where he took up his position, being equidistant from York and from Niagara, not cut off from the possibility of communication with Procter, and hard by a good anchorage for the British fleet on Lake Ontario, when that fleet should appear.

His retreat had covered about fifty miles, though the distance from Fort George by the direct route by the lake shore was much less. It had been very skilfully conducted, and does not seem to have been seriously molested, though Dearborn reported that his light troops pursued for several miles. On the other hand, the Americans had achieved great success, and had well deserved it. They made good use of their superior numbers, of their ships, and of their guns. There was less of flaming proclamation than had previously been the case, and far more of solid work. Their casualties amounted only to about 150 men, whereas the British casualties numbered about 500. Dearborn states that he took 100 unwounded prisoners, but of the British regulars only 50 seem to have been taken, being a party of the 49th who had been stationed in Fort George and who failed to make good their retreat with the rest of the army. The net result was that the whole line of the Niagara fell into American hands; and, wishing to anticipate a possible junction between Vincent's troops and Procter's, should the latter withdraw from the Detroit frontier, Dearborn sent a strong force to follow up Vincent, which in a few days reached a stream called Stoney Creek, not more than seven miles distant from Vincent's encampment.

The country, where the two little armies were facing each other, is at the present time the best settled and most thickly populated district in Canada. Small towns and railway stations have grown up at or near points which in 1813 were distinguished only by the distances, such as Twenty Mile or Forty Mile Creek. The high ground where Vincent turned to bay—a continuation of the transverse ridge through which the Niagara river cuts its way between Queenston and Lewiston Heights—now overlooks the city

of Hamilton, with more than 50,000 inhabitants. In June, 1813, there was little prospect of coming Canadian prosperity, and with the Niagara frontier overrun by Americans in front, with York taken and looted by Americans behind, it must have seemed as though the present garden of Canada would be annexed to the United States. But the American army, having done an excellent piece of work, relapsed into the inefficiency which had been so marked earlier in the war.

It was the 5th of June when they arrived at Stoney Creek, driving out Vincent's outposts. Their object was, as already stated, to anticipate a junction between Vincent and Procter, and also, if possible, to push forward between Burlington Heights and the lake, and so to cut Vincent's communication with York. They were about 3,000 strong, under Generals Chandler and Winder, with artillery; but about one-third of the total number was detached from the main body and stationed on the lake at the mouth of the creek, between one and two miles away. The rest of the force was encamped for the night athwart the main road which ran parallel to the lake. There was no fault to find with the position. It was at the edge of a clearing, on a steep bank surmounted by a rail fence, with an open meadow immediately in front, the left or inland flank being protected by hill and woods, and the right flank, towards the lake, by swamp. If attacked at all, it could only be attacked in front, and common care should have made the encampment absolutely secure. The men, however, it would seem, were strewn about in straggling, careless fashion. Pickets and guards were stationed according to General Chandler's account of the battle; but, if this was the case, they were certainly not on the alert. 'The sentries at the outskirts of the enemy's camp,' wrote Colonel Harvey after the action, 'were bayonetted in the quietest manner.'

The fight at Stoney Creek.

Before sundown, Harvey, who was acting as deputy Adjutant-General to Vincent's army, taking the light companies of the 8th and the 49th, had reconnoitred the

American encampment, and, as the result of his observations, proposed a night attack. Vincent consented, and came with the force, but left the leading in Harvey's capable hands. At half-past eleven on that night the attacking party set out from the British lines. It consisted, to quote Vincent's report, of '704 firelocks'. All were men of the 8th and 49th regiments, the latter preponderating. The light companies led the way. The night was unusually dark for the time of year, and no alarm was given until Harvey and his men were within 300 yards of the American camp. Then, before the line of assault was formed, some cheering and firing on the British side, contrary to orders, made further surprise impossible; and, lit up by the camp fires which were burning a little in front of the American position, the assailants became a mark for the musketry of the defenders on the high ground above. All was confusion, and the enterprise might well have resulted in a crushing disaster to the British force had not Major Plenderleath, who commanded the 49th regiment, backed by a young Scotch sergeant and a handful of men, charged up the road through the centre of the American line and rushed the guns which were in position behind the centre and were beginning to open fire. There was then hand-to-hand fighting in the dark, most of the work being done with the bayonet, and friends and foes mistaking each other; but in the end the Americans were driven from their camp and, when day broke, the British force had taken a hundred prisoners, including the two American generals, who had stumbled into their ranks, and four guns, two of which were spiked and left, and two carried off to Burlington Heights, to which Harvey at once retreated, before the Americans had time to reform and retrieve the disaster. With daylight the Americans returned to their camp, but only to destroy some of the stores and retreat at once in a disorganized condition ten or eleven miles further back to Forty Mile Creek, where they met reinforcements; and the van of Vincent's force moved forward the same day to the deserted camp, and

took possession of such stores and ammunition as had not been carried off or destroyed.

It was a curious episode, this night attack at Stoney Creek. The enterprise was well planned but, through no fault of the commanding officer, Harvey, not so well carried out. One of the officers of the 49th, Lieutenant James FitzGibbon, well qualified to judge, wrote two days later: 'This business was, I think, very ill executed by us, and the great error was shouting before the line was formed for the attack.'[1] The British casualties were heavier than the American. In the confusion of the night from 40 to 60 men of the 49th were taken prisoners; and the total casualties amounted to between 200 and 250, whereas the American casualties, including prisoners, did not reach 200. Luck was on the British side. It was mere chance that the two American commanders were taken prisoners. The same fate might well have befallen the British general, Vincent, who was separated from his staff in the darkness, lost count of what had happened, and did not emerge from the woods and rejoin his friends until the day following the night attack was well advanced. There was, in short, an element of comedy about the episode, but it added to, rather than detracted from, the impression which was produced. The Americans, sweeping on in the tide of victory, with largely superior numbers, prepared to overwhelm the small, retreating British army and clear the peninsula, were suddenly attacked, stampeded, and driven into retreat, leaving behind them guns and commanding officers. They lost confidence; their opponents gained confidence; the daring of the attack and its success gave new heart to the Canadians; and the fight at Stoney Creek was a turning-point in the campaign.

Colonel John Harvey.

The credit of the enterprise, as Vincent most fully acknowledged in his dispatch, was due to Harvey. Though still a young man, he had seen fighting in many parts of the world. He had only lately joined the force

[1] *Documentary History of the Campaign upon the Niagara Frontier in the year* 1813. Pt. II, 1813, p. 15. (Lundy's Lane Historical Society.)

in Upper Canada[1], but he had shown his worth in the battle of Fort George and the subsequent retreat; and from this time onward he was second to none in the list of men, not in supreme command, who fought for and kept Canada. He himself and a few others of the same type, either on the staff or in regimental command, were largely responsible for the successful issue of the war. After its close he served at Waterloo, and in later years he administered the governments of the Maritime Provinces of Canada and of Newfoundland, being Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia when he died in 1852.

Yeo's fleet appears and the Americans retreat.

The Americans found no rest at Forty Mile Creek. Their right, as they faced towards Stoney Creek and Burlington Heights, rested on the lake, on which there was a fleet of boats accompanying them with stores and baggage. On the evening of the 7th of June ships came in sight, and proved to be the British squadron, under Sir James Yeo, which had come up from Kingston. Early on the following morning the lighter vessels of the little fleet came in close to shore and bombarded the American camp, the Americans returning the fire with red-hot shot from a furnace improvised for the occasion. At the same time a party of Indians appeared on the inland side of the camp and molested its occupants. Yeo sent a summons to surrender, which was naturally rejected; but the Americans broke up their encampment and continued their retreat, leaving the camp with its stores to be occupied by the advanced guard of Vincent's force combined with a detachment of the 8th regiment, which had been brought on the ships. A dozen of the boats were taken by the squadron, which then proceeded to patrol the coast, capturing and appropriating to British use stores which had been intended for the American army.

Vincent was now no longer short of stores and provisions,

[1] Prevost, in reporting on the fight and on Vincent's tribute to Harvey's 'zeal, intelligence, and gallantry', added that so great was Harvey's desire to reach the front 'that he walked on snowshoes in the depth of last winter through the wilds lying between the Canadas and New Brunswick.' See above, pp. 7, 8.

and his force was greatly strengthened in numbers. The men of the 8th, whom Yeo's ships had brought, were between two and three hundred, and shortly afterwards another regiment was sent by Prevost to Upper Canada. This was the 104th, or New Brunswick regiment, which had marched overland in the winter from Fredericton to Quebec. The vanguard of the little army was, under Colonel Bisshopp, moved forward to a point at or a little beyond Twenty Mile Creek, near the present village of Jordan, where from the main road which led direct to Newark and Fort George, and ran near and parallel to the shore of Lake Ontario, another road diverged inland, leading to Beaver Dam and thence to St. David's and Queenston. Two outposts were stationed further in advance towards the Niagara river. One of these, under Major de Haren, of the 104th regiment, was placed near St. Catharine's, either at Twelve Mile Creek, on which St. Catharine's stands, or two miles further on towards Fort George at Ten Mile Creek. This detachment held the main road from Fort George. The other outpost was placed upon the inland road to Beaver Dam, at a point about one and a half miles short of that place. Here there was a stone house belonging to a settler called De Cou, or, according to one account, De Camp, described by Fitz-Gibbon, who commanded the soldiers at this point, as 'De Cou's house in Thorold'. The township or concession of Thorold had lately been demarcated, and the present town stands on the Welland canal about four miles from St. Catharine's. This outpost covered the inland road from St. David's and Queenston, and it was connected with De Haren's post by a cross-road. The main advance force and the two outposts thus formed a triangle; they were, very roughly, equidistant from each other, and each of the three positions was at cross-roads. Beaver Dam was about sixteen miles from Fort George by the road which passed through Queenston and St. David's, and De Cou's house was therefore between seventeen and eighteen miles from Fort George by the same route. The

The British position near Beaver Dam.

dam was at a spot described as a hilly pass on a creek running from the high ground already mentioned, which extends from Queenston to Burlington Heights. It was nearly due south of St. Catharine's, and on or near the line of the Welland canal, the cutting of which absorbed it. The outpost at De Cou's house seems to have consisted of about fifty men of the 49th regiment, though some accounts state that it was held by a party of the 104th. The officer in charge was FitzGibbon, a subaltern of the 49th regiment, daring and adventurous in outpost work, whose name will for ever live in the annals of the war. We read that 'Lieutenant FitzGibbon, of the 49th regiment, had a separate command, composed of all the men whose names figured in the regimental records as notoriously troublesome characters, who were ever and anon the subjects of court-martial. They were all Irishmen, speaking the Irish vernacular, as did their countryman the chief.'[1] This young Irish officer and his skirmishers, working in co-operation with parties of Indians, prominent among whom was a son of the old chief, Joseph Brant, had made themselves heavily felt by the Americans all along the Canadian side of the Niagara river, with the result that the American posts above the falls on the Canadian side were called in, Fort Erie being dismantled and abandoned; and the army was concentrated below the falls from Queenston to Fort George. As June went on, the Americans determined to try to dislodge FitzGibbon and his men from their post at De Cou's house, and, if possible, at the same time to drive back De Haren also. The enterprise against FitzGibbon was entrusted to Colonel Boerstler, who took with him a party of nearly 600 men.

Fitz-Gibbon.

On the evening of the 23rd of June they marched up the Niagara river from Fort George to Queenston, quartered at Queenston for the night, and very early on the 24th set out on their ten to twelve miles' march to Beaver Dam and

[1] From the Memoirs of Colonel John Clark, of Port Dalhousie, printed at p. 154 of Pt. I, 1813, of *The Documentary History of the Campaign upon the Niagara Frontier in the year* 1813. (Lundy's Lane Historical Society.)

De Cou's house beyond. On the night before, FitzGibbon had been warned of the intended surprise, and preparations had been made. As Boerstler advanced in the early morning of the 24th, he was ambushed and attacked by a party of some 450 to 500 Indians. He seems, notwithstanding, to have continued his march, keeping up a running fight with the Indians who hung upon his flanks and rear, until he was within two miles of Beaver Dam, and within three to four miles of De Cou's house. FitzGibbon, according to his official report, learnt, about seven o'clock in the morning, that the enemy were advancing. Shortly afterwards, hearing the sound of firing, he rode out about two miles on the road to St. David's, and, finding the Americans drawing off towards high ground on their left and his right, he also took up a position on high ground to the right, which commanded them, and, having ordered up his detachment, led them across the enemy's front, in order to gain the other flank and intercept, or appear to intercept, the line of retreat towards Queenston and Fort George. At this point he was informed that Boerstler had already sent back for reinforcements, though the information appears not to have been true, and accordingly he lost no time in summoning him to surrender. The Americans had been fighting for some three hours. Bewildered and confused by attacks from the woods on different sides, they imagined that they were surrounded by superior numbers, and surrendered nominally to Major de Haren, whose name FitzGibbon used for his purpose, and who actually came up with over 200 men in time to sign the articles of surrender. The result was that Colonel Bisshopp, who also reached Beaver Dam in the course of the day, was able to report the capture of some 500 Americans and two guns as the result of the skill and prowess of the Indians and of FitzGibbon's bluff. The services of the Indians on this occasion appear not to have been adequately acknowledged, although Colonel Bisshopp reported that they were the only force actively engaged, and some years later, in March, 1818, FitzGibbon wrote in

The fight at Beaver Dam.

similar terms to the officer who had commanded them, Captain William Kerr. His letter ran: 'Not a shot was fired on our side by any but the Indians. They beat the American detachment into a state of terror, and the only share I claim is taking advantage of a favourable moment to offer them protection from the tomahawk and scalping knife.'[1]

The court of inquiry which was held into Boerstler's conduct reported, in February, 1815, that the surrender was justified by the existing circumstances, and that the reverse was not due to misconduct on his part or on that of his men. The finding was a reasonable one. He was sent with an inadequate force; no provision was made to support him; and there was no attempt to co-operate with him by means of a simultaneous attack on De Haren's position. Ambushed in the woods, ignorant of the numbers opposed to him, he surrendered to save the lives of his men from the Indians, whose taste for blood had been whetted by their own losses. The incident was quite intelligible, but it could be made to appear in an ignominious and ridiculous light; and following upon the surprise at Stoney Creek, once more it dispirited the Americans, and, in a corresponding degree, encouraged their adversaries.

Laura Secord.

It has been stated that FitzGibbon had been warned beforehand that an attempt would be made to surprise his post. The warning was given by Laura Secord, wife of James Secord, one of a family of United Empire Loyalists, who lived at Queenston, and whose brother, Major David Secord, gave his name to the village of St. David's on Four Mile Creek. The story goes that Laura Secord had heard American officers at Queenston talking over the plan, and starting at early dawn on the morning of the 23rd, circling through the woods to avoid American sentries, she walked through the long summer's day for nineteen or twenty

[1] pp. 120–1 of Pt. II, 1813, of *The Documentary History of the Campaign upon the Niagara Frontier in the year* 1813. (Lundy's Lane Historical Society.)

miles, and after sundown reached the Indian encampment hard by FitzGibbon's quarters. Wearied out and frightened by the Indian challenge, she carried out her purpose: taken on to FitzGibbon she told her tale, and gave the warning which she had risked her life to give. As Madeleine de Verchères, who held her home against the Iroquois in the days of old Count Frontenac, is the heroine of French Canadian story, so in the annals of Upper Canada and the United Empire Loyalists, Laura Secord is the typical brave woman. Like the French girl, she lived to a good old age, and Canadian verse and prose have kept her memory [1].

Before this reverse at Beaver Dam occurred, Dearborn, the Commander-in-chief of the American army on the Canadian frontier from Niagara eastward, had already sent in his resignation on the ground of ill health, though he signed the dispatch reporting Boerstler's surrender. General Wilkinson, who had been in command at New Orleans of the district of the Mississippi, was nominated as his successor, but the charge of the Niagara frontier for the time devolved on General Boyd. On the other side, General de Rottenburg, who, like Prevost, was a Swiss, and who had been appointed as Sheaffe's successor, came up in July and took over from Vincent the command of the British forces on the line of the Niagara. The army, with its head quarters at first at St. Catharine's and afterwards at St. David's, cooped up the Americans at Newark and Fort George, and carried war on to the American side of the river above the falls. At daybreak on July 5, a small party mainly of militia, crossing over from Chippawa, surprised an American outpost on guard at Fort Schlosser immediately above the falls, and carried

The Americans blockaded at Fort George.

[1] Two books at least have been written on Laura Secord; and a good account of her exploit will be found in *A Veteran of 1812, the Life of James FitzGibbon*, by Mary Agnes FitzGibbon, 1894. The accounts of the Beaver Dam incident are very confusing. It is not clear, for instance, whether Boerstler was trying to retreat to Queenston or across country towards Lundy's Lane, and whether FitzGibbon tried to intercept the retreat on the right, or, as stated above, crossed over to the left.

off a handful of prisoners, a gun, and stores; and again at daybreak on the 11th, a larger force of about 240 men crossed to Black Rock, carried the batteries, stampeded the garrison, took off four guns and a quantity of stores, destroyed four other guns, burnt the barracks, block-houses, and a ship which was lying at the yard; but being attacked by the Americans, who had recovered from their panic and been reinforced by regulars from Buffalo, and by a party of Indians, they lost somewhat heavily in retreating across the river, their young commander, Colonel Bisshopp, who had done excellent service throughout the war on the Niagara frontier, being mortally wounded.

Death of Colonel Bisshopp.

Indian allies of the Americans.

The Indians who co-operated with the Americans on this occasion were mainly Senecas and other members of the Six Nations, who had remained in their old homes in New York state when their brethren of the confederacy crossed over to Upper Canada at the end of the War of Independence. They now, for the first time apparently, took their place in the fighting line with the Americans, and a little later, on August 17, General Boyd reported a skirmish between pickets, in which the fighting was mainly between Indians on either side. In his report the American general was at pains to explain that his savage allies 'covenanted not to scalp or murder', and that 'their bravery and humanity were equally conspicuous'. In this particular skirmish, among the white men on the American side who supported the Indian attack, Boyd noted that 'the Canadian volunteers, under Major Willcocks, were active and brave as usual'. Willcocks was the notoriously disloyal member of the Legislature of Upper Canada, who has already been mentioned. He had become an open enemy of his country and, crossing to the United States, had taken service with the Americans, organizing a corps of deserters from Canada, most of whom were probably Americans by birth. That a certain proportion of residents in Upper Canada favoured the American cause was only what might have been expected; and later in the autumn, after the annihilation of Procter's force had caused the western

Canadian renegades.

districts of Upper Canada in the region of Lake Erie to be denuded of troops, we read of the disloyal inhabitants looting the homes of the Loyalists, and of the latter retaliating, and, as the result of a fight near Port Dover on Lake Erie, carrying off some of the marauders to be tried and hung for high treason. The outpost fight which has been mentioned was followed by an abortive attempt against Fort George amounting to little more than a reconnaissance in force, which was made on the British side on August 24, at a time when Sir George Prevost had come up to the front. It resulted in nothing more than driving in the American pickets with a small loss on either side, and in the British force regaining temporary possession of Newark, which, however, was not held. Apart from these skirmishes there was a lull in the fighting on the Niagara frontier, caused partly by sickness, which was rife in both armies, and partly by the fact that the Americans had in contemplation a combined attack on Montreal, of which more will be told hereafter.

The Home government had promised that a small number of naval officers and seamen should be sent out as early as possible in 1813 for service on the lakes. Towards the end of April, Prevost wrote that he was glad to hear that some naval officers were coming up overland from Halifax to Quebec. This party included Captain Barclay, who was afterwards sent on to command the British flotilla on Lake Erie, and who has been mentioned as meeting Vincent at Beaver Dam when the latter was retiring from Fort George to Burlington Heights. Shortly afterwards, on May 18, Prevost wrote from Kingston that Commodore Sir James Yeo had reached Quebec from England on the 5th of that month with the officers and seamen under his command, and that he himself had come up with Yeo to Kingston to take measures for regaining British ascendancy on Lake Ontario. Yeo was a young officer just over thirty years of age, having been born in 1782. He had gone to sea in 1793, when he was a boy of eleven, and had served in various parts of the world, in the West Indies,

Sir James Yeo arrives in Canada.

in the Mediterranean, at Lisbon, and in Brazil. He had been much thrown with the Portuguese, and, in charge of a Portuguese expedition from Brazil, he had in 1809 taken the French settlement of Cayenne. His service had been rather outside the ordinary sphere of naval officers of the day, and he was therefore well fitted for a small independent command, where all would turn on the initiative and resource of an officer accustomed to make the most of whatever material might be to hand. He reached Kingston on May 10, and before the end of the month his men and ships were ready for action.

The attempt on Sackett's Harbour.

Chauncey's fleet and most of the American troops which had been gathered at Sackett's Harbour being engaged at the other end of the lake in the reduction of Fort George, a good opportunity presented itself of making a counter-attack on Sackett's Harbour; and on the evening of May 27, the day on which Fort George was taken, Yeo sailed out of Kingston harbour for the purpose, having on board some 750 troops of the line. Sir George Prevost accompanied the expedition in person, but the troops were under the immediate command of Colonel Baynes, his Adjutant-General. It has been seen that Sackett's Harbour lay directly over against Kingston, a little to the east of south, at about thirty-five or thirty-six miles distance by the navigable channels. It is described as a small harbour but convenient, and sheltered by high ground. The harbour faced north. On the eastern side there was at this time a fort, Fort Pike; and on the western side, where the land ran out beyond the inlet which formed the harbour, there was another fort, the main fort, named Fort Tompkins, close to which barracks had been built. At some distance westward of Fort Tompkins, an island, which was only an island at high water, being connected with the mainland by a natural causeway, lay off the shore to the north-west. It was known as Horse Island.

At noon on the 28th Yeo's squadron was off Sackett's Harbour, but the ships were becalmed before they were sufficiently near to the land, and the soldiers, who had been

put into boats in readiness to force a landing under cover of the ships' guns, were replaced on board the vessels, the intended attack being counter-ordered. Meanwhile, a small party of Indians, who had accompanied the expedition, paddling westward along the shore in their canoes, discovered another small party of Americans having come from the direction of Oswego, who were landing near Sackett's Harbour and were intercepted and taken. The British commanders thereupon seem to have once more determined to make an attempt on the place, and before daylight on the 29th the troops were again ordered into the boats.

Two guns intended to support the landing were put into a small schooner, which failed to make the land, but either one or two gunboats covered the disembarkation. The proposed point of landing was on the mainland, where the causeway ran out to Horse Island; but whether, as the official report stated, because the landing was opposed at this point, or because the current carried the boats further on and there was confusion in the darkness, the troops actually landed on Horse Island on the farther or western side. The landing was under fire, and, as the troops advanced along the causeway, they were opposed by part of the American force and a six-pounder gun; but driving back their opponents they reached the mainland. The American garrison was commanded by Major-General Jacob Brown, who had arrived early on the morning of the 28th. It seems to have comprised about the same number of regulars as composed the British force, in addition to some 500 militia and volunteers. The latter, who met the first advance, broke and fled. The British force then marched towards Fort Tompkins in two columns, the left keeping along the line of the shore, where amid the woods they suffered somewhat heavily from the fire of the Americans, the right finding less opposition in more open ground. Combining again, the two wings advanced towards the barracks and fort into which the garrison were driven back; but, just as victory seemed secure,

Landing of the troops.

when the advancing troops had set fire to the barracks, and the Americans themselves had begun to burn their storehouses and a new ship which was on the stocks, the attack was countermanded and the troops were drawn off and re-embarked, having suffered between 250 and 300 casualties and leaving some killed and wounded in the charge of the Americans. The account given in the official report, which was signed, not by Prevost himself, but by Colonel Baynes, and which was thought to have been written to order, was that the 'blockhouse and stockaded battery could not be carried by assault, nor reduced by field pieces, had we been provided with them'. There was also a suggestion in American accounts that General Brown threatened, or made a feint of threatening, communication with the boats, and thereby induced the enemy to retreat. Prevost, in the dispatch in which he forwarded Colonel Baynes's report to Lord Bathurst, wrote that he gave the order to retreat, and alleged as his reason for doing so, that the fleet, owing to the want of favourable winds, was unable to co-operate, and without the aid of heavy artillery it was impossible to take the position. Yeo, too, in a short report to the Admiralty, stated that the gunboats were wholly unable with their small carronades to make any impression upon the forts and blockhouses. In the defence of Prevost's public career, which was published by his family after his death [1], it was recounted that, though he accompanied the expedition, he was not in personal command, and that the failure of the enterprise was due to the inadequate numbers of the attacking force, the want of artillery, and the inability of the fleet to co-operate owing to the state of the wind.

Prevost orders a retreat.

His reasons for doing so.

But, whatever may have been the grounds upon which Prevost recalled the troops and abandoned the attack, his action was almost universally condemned in Canada; and, when it is considered on its merits, still more, when it is considered in the light of the similar and greater fiasco on

[1] *Some Account of the Public Life of the Late Lieutenant-General Sir G. Prevost* (1823), p. 88.

Lake Champlain in the following year, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that he showed himself to be a weak and irresolute leader. There was evidently some indecision in postponing the attack in the first instance. If the forces were inadequate for the task which they were set to accomplish, the responsibility rested with the Commander-in-chief; and the plea that, though he accompanied the expedition, he was not in immediate command of the troops, cannot be held to diminish the blame which attaches to him; rather, it must be held to give a clue to the character of the man. Either the expedition should not have been undertaken at all, or it should have been carried through at almost any cost. What Kingston was to the British, Sackett's Harbour was to the Americans, the most vital point on Lake Ontario. To the British and to the Americans alike it was all important to secure ascendancy on the lake, and to Upper Canada it was almost a matter of life and death. Brock realized this, and contemplated at the outset of the war an attack on Sackett's Harbour. The chance of taking it justified incurring heavy risk and making heavy sacrifice; yet, when the enterprise had been carried to a point at which it is difficult to doubt, from reading the accounts, that at the cost of additional loss the position could have been stormed, Prevost relinquished the attempt and returned to Kingston. He reported to the Home government that the expedition had not been a complete success. The American commander, Jacob Brown, reported to his government that the Americans had been completely victorious, and he had some reason for saying so. The enemy had retreated, with some prisoners it is true, but leaving killed and wounded on the field. The new ship had been saved from the flames, which were intended to prevent her falling into British hands; the works were reinstated; the garrison was reinforced; new forts were added; and Sackett's Harbour was placed in comparative security for the future.

Estimate of his conduct.

Two or three days after the fleet returned to Kingston,

Yeo sailed off again with stores and men for Vincent's army, and fell in with them and with the retreating Americans after the engagement at Stoney Creek, as already told; while Chauncey sailed back from Niagara to Sackett's Harbour. There now ensued a time of manœuvring, raiding and blockading without decisive action, each commander knowing his trade, each conscious that the addition or subtraction of one little ship to or from their tiny squadrons might mean the loss of the whole, both, therefore, being resolved not to fight except at an advantage, and either reporting in turn that the other could not be brought to bay. Chauncey's first object was to fit out the new ship, the *General Pike*, which had been saved from the flames. Christie[1] tells us that early in July Yeo made an attempt to send boats into the harbour and cut her out; but his intention was discovered before it could be carried into effect, and towards the end of that month the American squadron sailed out and made for Burlington bay to attack a British dépôt on the heights. Hearing that a detachment of troops was being sent up from York to meet his attack, Chauncey drew off, and sailed for York, where he arrived on July 31, and, finding it undefended, on that day and the next landed some men, who liberated the prisoners in the gaol, looted stores, and burnt a storehouse and woodyard. From the 7th to the 10th of August the two rival squadrons manœuvred against each other at the upper end of the lake, Chauncey losing two schooners in a squall and two other small vessels cut off by Yeo. In the second week of September the American commodore reported that he had chased his adversary all round the lake, with apparently little result. On September 28 there was some heavy firing between the squadrons off York, Yeo's flagship, the *Wolfe*, being temporarily disabled, and his vessels being driven to take shelter in Burlington bay; and at the beginning of October Chauncey ran down and captured five small ships with a detachment of troops on board. Yeo then retired for

Chauncey and Yeo on Lake Ontario.

[1] *History of Lower Canada*, vol II. p. 98.

a while into Kingston harbour, where he was blockaded by the Americans. Meanwhile on Lake Erie far more decisive fighting had taken place.

The rival commanders on Lake Erie, Barclay and Perry.

On Lake Erie the rival commanders were, on the British side Captain Robert Barclay, on the American Captain Oliver Perry. Barclay was a brave, hard-fighting sailor, 'our father with one arm' as the Indian chief, Tecumseh, called him, for he had lost an arm at Trafalgar. He had been sent up from Halifax by Warren, the Commander-in-chief on the North American station, and reached Kingston early in May. When Yeo arrived at Kingston a little later, he sent Barclay on to take command of the Lake Erie squadron, and the latter, after meeting Vincent on his retreat from Fort George, went on his way to Lake Erie with a small party of seamen, and took over charge of the squadron in the first half of June. Perry, as has been seen, had come down from Presque Isle, where he was in command of the American marine on Lake Erie, when Dearborn and Chauncey concentrated their forces at the mouth of the Niagara river, and had acted as Chauncey's chief of the staff in the combined operations against Fort George. The withdrawal of the British troops from the whole line of the Niagara river after the capture of Fort George had enabled him to take up to Presque Isle some small vessels which had been fitting out at Black Rock, but which could not be moved as long as a British garrison held Fort Erie, and the guns of the fort commanded the shipping on the opposite side of the river. On his return to Presque Isle he prepared to dispute the British command of Lake Erie.

That command rested on the most slender basis. When the fighting came, six little vessels constituted the British fleet. The largest, a new half-fitted vessel, which had been in building at the makeshift naval dépôt at Amherstburg, only measured 305 tons. Barclay wrote to Procter on June 29 of the general want of stores of every description, of guns, of shipwrights. Still more serious was the want of trained British seamen. Not more than fifty were at

British difficulties on Lake Erie.

Barclay's disposal, the ships being largely manned by Canadian boatmen, and by soldiers of the line temporarily converted into sailors. 'The ships are manned with a crew,' wrote Barclay in the same letter, 'part of whom cannot even speak English, none of them seamen, and very few even in numbers.' For this deplorable absence of men and of resources Prevost was not to blame. No one had laid greater stress than he had upon the necessity of keeping full command of the water in Canada. If any one was to blame it was the Home government, in that they had not made adequate preparation in the past, and that government must be leniently judged in view of the strain which had been put upon it by years of war in all parts of the world. Geography was at the root of the matter. It was the remoteness of Lake Erie from the source of British supplies, the slowness and difficulty of communication as compared with the contiguity of the Americans to their base, which gave the advantage and the victory to the latter.

Barclay's designs on Presque Isle.

Presque Isle on Lake Erie answered to Sackett's Harbour on Lake Ontario, as Amherstburg was a poor reproduction of Kingston. From Amherstburg to Long Point at the lower end of the lake, where any stores or men coming from Eastern Canada were shipped, Barclay kept patrol. As soon as he reached the lake, he reconnoitred Presque Isle and proposed an immediate attack upon it by land and water, 'to destroy the nest,' as he termed it; but, willing as Procter was to co-operate, it was impossible to undertake the enterprise without reinforcements, and reinforcements were not forthcoming. All that could be done was to keep the Americans as far as possible blockaded in the harbour. Here they were building, equipping, and manning their miniature fleet; but there was an awkward bar to the harbour, and the ships could not make their way out in fighting trim, with the heavy guns on board. Barclay for a while kept them close bound in port, while his own new ship, the *Detroit*, was being completed, and waiting in vain for guns and crew. Towards the end of August

either he relaxed his watch, or the blockade became impossible, and Perry's vessels made their way to the open lake. The American squadron being stronger than the British, the latter was now in turn kept close at Amherstburg. There the situation became most serious. Important as it was to keep open water communication on Lake Ontario, it was still more important, if the garrisons on the Detroit frontier were to be maintained, to have the right of way on Lake Erie, owing to the difficulty of forwarding stores and provisions by land. Alarming reports came from Amherstburg, where crowds of Indian fighters were clamouring to be fed. Prevost, after the annihilation of Barclay's flotilla, wrote that he was inquiring why action had been taken before reinforcements arrived; but, before he heard of the disaster, he had written expressing his anxiety that some bold attempt should be made to obtain supremacy of the lake, in order to give passage to the supplies which were waiting on its shores at Long Point. Barclay himself, immediately after the battle, described the distress existing at Amherstburg in the following terms: 'So perfectly destitute of provisions was the port, that there was not a day's flour in store; and the crews of the squadron under my command were on half allowance of many things, and when that was done there was no more.' Accordingly Procter and he determined that a fight must be risked without waiting for a fresh party of seamen who were on their way overland to Amherstburg, but of whose coming Barclay had no sure knowledge, and without waiting for the guns intended for the *Detroit*. That vessel was hastily fitted up with other guns taken from the fort at Amherstburg; so deficient were the matches and tubes that pistols had to be fired at the guns to produce a discharge: and with half allowances of rations for a week, and enough spirits but no more to last out the action, the poor little assortment of vessels, with their mixed complement of landsmen and sailors, sailed out on September 9 to fight the enemy.

Perry's ships command the lake.

Perry, like Barclay, had partially manned his ships

with soldiers from Harrison's army, and most warmly acknowledged their services after the fight was over. On this same 9th of September he was lying among the Put-in-Bay islands at the south-western end of Lake Erie, between Sandusky and the Detroit river. On the morning of the 10th the two fleets sighted each other, the American vessels being nine in number against the British six, and better equipped in gunnery. There were only two ships of appreciable size on either side. These were on the American side the *Lawrence*, which was Perry's flag-ship, and the *Niagara*, commanded by Captain Jesse Elliott, the daring officer who in the previous October had cut out and captured two British vessels under the guns of Fort Erie at the entrance of the Niagara river. The corresponding vessels on the British side were the *Detroit*, which carried Captain Barclay's flag, and the *Queen Charlotte*, commanded by Captain Finnis. The action began about noon, the two commanders leading the van. After a few long shots from the *Detroit*, Perry came to close quarters, and for two hours there was a desperate fight between the *Lawrence* and the *Detroit*. At length the *Lawrence* was wholly disabled, and after Perry had gone on board the *Niagara*, the *Lawrence* struck her colours, but could not be taken by the enemy, for the only boat which the *Detroit* possessed had been hammered to pieces, and meanwhile the *Niagara* bore down upon her. This latter ship had been skilfully kept by Elliott[1] out of the reach of the guns of her antagonist, the *Queen Charlotte*, while the *Queen Charlotte* had been badly mauled by the guns of the smaller craft and had lost earlier in the action her commander, Captain Finnis, a good trained naval officer, 'whose life,' wrote Sir James Yeo, in forwarding Barclay's report on the action, 'had it been spared, would in my opinion have saved the squadron'; Barclay's own words being that 'with him fell my greatest support'. Coming up comparatively fresh and uninjured, and supported by

The battle of Lake Erie.

[1] Elliott's conduct of his ship, however, was at a later date the subject of criticism and inquiry in the United States.

the smaller vessels, the *Niagara* decided the day; the *Detroit*, by this time little more than a wreck, and the *Queen Charlotte* fell foul of each other, and, raked with fire at the closest quarters, surrendered with two of the smaller vessels; the remaining two of the six attempted to escape, but were followed and taken. Annihilation of the British fleet.

Thus the whole British fleet was wiped out, the Americans won a victory complete at every point, and Lake Erie became for the time being the property of the United States. President Madison had told Congress on May 25, 'On the lakes our superiority is near at hand, where it is not already established.' In the following December another message from him to Congress referred to Perry's victory as 'a victory never surpassed in lustre, however it may have been in magnitude.' Perry proved himself to be a generous as he was a brave man. Barclay bore witness to his adversary's humane kindliness to his wounded prisoners, and, badly wounded himself, was landed—in Perry's words—as near Lake Ontario as possible, to be sent home on parole. The court-martial that sat on him acquitted him most fully and honourably, attributing the disaster to the very defective means of equipment which he possessed, to 'the want of a sufficient number of able seamen, whom he had repeatedly and earnestly requested of Sir James Yeo to be sent to him', to the superiority of the enemy's force, and to the loss of the superior officers early in the action. It was a fair and just finding, except that it reflected on Yeo. Blame might be and was attributed, in this quarter and that, to Prevost, most unjustly[1], to Yeo, to Procter, to Barclay himself, not in the action itself when he did all that man could do, but on the alleged ground that he had previously relaxed his blockade of Presque Isle; but the simple fact was, and is, that men cannot make bricks without straw, and it is useless to belabour the foremen when the straw is not forthcoming. Causes of the disaster.

[1] In *Some Account of the Public Life of Sir G. Prevost* (1823), pp. 109–10, will be found a letter from Captain Barclay fully exculpating Prevost from any blame as regards the naval disaster on Lake Erie.

The wonder is not that Lake Erie and the Detroit frontier were lost when they were lost, but that, in view of the miserably inadequate resources on the British side, the distance from a base of supplies and reinforcements, and the difficulty of communication, Barclay and Procter had held their ground so long.

Desperate position of Procter.

For the loss of Barclay's ships meant ruin to Procter. The Indians implored him to stand and fight, but to stay was to starve or be annihilated by Harrison's overwhelming forces. The Americans had concentrated from the Sandusky to the Miami, mainly at the Portage river, waiting for the command of the lake to be decided before they advanced. Governor Meigs, of Ohio, had his militia ready for Harrison's orders. Shelby, the veteran governor of Kentucky, who had fought at King's Mountain in the War of Independence, personally led on his men, bidden to be mindful of the fight on the river au Raisin. With Harrison were Cass and MacArthur, who had served under Hull, eager to wipe out the disgrace of Hull's surrender. Michigan Territory, annexed by Brock, was to be once for all recovered, and the British and Canadians were to be driven once for all from both sides of the Detroit river.

His delay.

A fortnight, however, passed before Perry was able to carry the troops across the end of the lake, a mounted column being at the same time sent on by land to Detroit. Procter, therefore, had a sufficient interval to effect a safe retreat, to bring off the wounded and sick, and such stores as were absolutely necessary, but he does not seem to have made the best use of his time. Ten days and more passed before he left Amherstburg, destroying what remained of the already half-dismantled fort at Malden, burning the shipyard and barracks and such stores as he could not take with him. Before Barclay's fight his white soldiers numbered a full thousand men, nearly all of the 41st regiment. When the retreat began, the numbers had been diminished by the troops who were killed or taken on board the ships, and hardly amounted to 800, of whom a much smaller number were effectives. Te-

He retreats,

cumseh went with him, leading the Indians, but in constantly diminishing numbers. The only road, and the road which he took, making for the head of Lake Ontario, was due north along the Detroit river to Sandwich, then eastward along the southern shore of Lake St. Clair to the mouth of the river Thames, then following the course of that river in a north-easterly direction past the present town of Chatham, the road or track for a long distance lying on the southern bank of the river, and then crossing to the other side. Thus his retreat lay by the water-ways, and boats could accompany him, bringing his baggage and ammunition.

and is pursued by Harrison.

He seems to have left Sandwich on September 26. On the 27th, Perry reported that Harrison's troops had on that day marched into Malden without opposition. On the evening of the 29th, the Americans occupied Sandwich and Detroit, the mounted column reaching Detroit on the 30th; and on the 29th Harrison issued a formal proclamation, stating that the enemy had been driven from Michigan Territory and that the previous civil government had been re-established [1]. It was October 2 before Harrison left Sandwich in pursuit of Procter, with a force which he returned in his dispatch as numbering about 3,500 men. As far as can be judged from the accounts, Procter's movements were culpably slow, the movements of an undecided man. The retreat, too, was cumbered by much baggage, brought laboriously up the stream in boats, or in wagons

[1] There is great confusion about the dates. In a dispatch Prevost stated that Procter left Sandwich on the 24th. In a general order he gives the 26th as the date. According to the American dispatches printed in Brannan's collection, Harrison wrote on the 23rd of September from 'Headquarters Amherstburg', stating that he had taken possession of the place at 3 o'clock on that morning, and that Procter had burnt the fort, i. e. Fort Malden, and retired to Sandwich. On the 24th, Perry reported that on the previous day he had transported 1,200 men to a small island about four leagues from Malden. On the 26th, general orders for landing were issued on board ship. On the 27th, Perry reported the occupation of Malden on that day. On the 29th, called 'the day of the debarkation of our troops into Canada,' another general order was issued from on board ship.

on the bank, while it was difficult to induce the Indians to constantly fall back before their foes. On October 1 the force reached a hamlet or farm named Dalson's, or Dolson's, on the river Thames, about fifteen miles from the mouth of the river, four or five miles below Chatham, and twenty-five or twenty-six miles below the missionary station called Moraviantown. Here Procter seems to have at first intended to stand and fight, and the troops remained stationary through October 2, though Procter himself went on to Moraviantown. On the 3rd, hearing that Harrison was following them up, the British continued their retreat to Chatham, and on that day or the next they crossed the river. On the 4th Procter rejoined them, and again they retreated further up the river on its northern side. On the morning of the 5th, still retreating, they reached a point about two miles short of Moraviantown, and here at length they were ordered to turn and face the enemy.

Harrison and his troops moved far more speedily, pressing on to an inevitable victory. Where the road ran by the lower reaches of the Thames, it crossed tributary creeks at different points which had been duly bridged. The first bridge Procter had unaccountably left standing behind him. Higher up the river the Americans on October 3 had intercepted a small party who had been left to destroy a second bridge, and had not completed their work. On that evening they encamped four miles below Dalson's. Up to this point their baggage and stores, like Procter's, had been mainly brought by water, convoyed by three of Perry's gunboats. To quicken up the pursuit Harrison now parted with the boats, and on the 4th he continued his advance, driving off at Chatham a body of Indians who disputed a crossing where a bridge had been half destroyed, and, as he went up the river-side, picking up jettisoned British stores in burning houses and boats[1], together with two twenty-four-pounder guns. Putting his troops in motion again early on the 5th he captured

[1] At the time of writing two of the hulls of Procter's derelict boats, about 75 feet long, are still lying in the river Thames near Chatham.

two more vessels with stores and ammunition, and some or all of a party of 150 men who formed their guard. At noon he threw his force across the river, two or three boats and some canoes being found for the purpose, and the mounted men carrying infantry soldiers behind them on their horses. Eight miles further on along the northern bank of the river he reached the encampment where the British rearguard had stayed the night before, and two miles higher up his mounted men found the remains of Procter's force drawn up across the line of march.

The fight near Moravian-town and annihilation of Procter's force.

To oppose Harrison's army Procter had less than 500 white soldiers, supplemented by a rather larger body of Indians under Tecumseh. He had chosen a good position for defence, where the road ran through beech-woods between the river on his left and a swamp upon his right. Both flanks were therefore protected, and he could only be defeated by a frontal attack. On the right were the Indians, thrown forward in the marshy ground so as to form an obtuse angle with the main line, ready to work round the American flank and rear. On the left, astride of the road, and abutting on the river, were the soldiers of the line, nearly all men of the 41st, drawn up in open files. But one small gun supported them, the few others that remained having been taken on to Moravian-town to guard a crossing there. Placing a strong force of infantry on his left, some of them drawn up at right angles to the line of fight to counteract any turning movement by the Indians, Harrison ordered his mounted men to charge the British regulars. The latter gave one volley, at which the horsemen recoiled, a second volley followed, but then the Americans rode down the scanty line. Ill fed, worried by uncertain and apparently aimless retreat, the men who had fought hard in many fights fought badly now, and almost immediately nearly all surrendered. The Indians made a stronger resistance and caused the Americans some loss, until Tecumseh fell, depriving the British cause in North America of the most skilful and the most chivalrous native leader who ever fought on their side.

Death of Tecum-seh.

Harrison pursued as far as Moraviantown, took the guns that had been placed there, with some more prisoners, mainly sick and wounded, and for no obvious reason burnt the settlement to the ground. He then returned to Sandwich, garrisoned that post and Detroit, and in due course carried off his regulars by water to the Niagara frontier, while the militia from Kentucky and Ohio went to their homes.

He had achieved complete success. Six hundred British soldiers were in his hands. All the guns were destroyed or taken, some of them, as he noted, having been spoils of the War of Independence, taken at Saratoga or Yorktown, lost again by Hull's surrender, and now once more recaptured; all the stores and small arms were taken; even Procter's private papers came into Harrison's possession. Procter himself escaped 'by the fleetness of his horses', wrote the American general, 'escorted by forty dragoons and a number of mounted Indians'. On October 17, he mustered at Ancaster on the Grand river, a few miles from Burlington Heights, all that had escaped from the fight at Moraviantown, and they numbered all told, officers and men, 246. Neither in the battle nor before it had Procter shown himself a leader of men. General Harrison wrote to his friend, governor Meigs, 'Nothing but infatuation could have governed General Procter's conduct . . . His inferior officers say that his conduct has been a series of continued blunders.' Prevost blamed him severely, and in a general order criticized the whole force, the conduct of the retreat and the defeat of the British soldiers, 'almost without a struggle.' Eventually, more than a year later, in December, 1814, Procter was tried by court-martial at Montreal, the charges brought against him being delay in beginning his retreat; delay on the retreat; neglect to take such precautions as breaking the bridges, and the cumbering of his force with useless baggage; omission to guard the boats and wagons that carried his supplies; bad choice of fighting ground and neglect to fortify his positions; neglect to make proper dispositions on the battle-field and misconduct in the

Court-martial on Procter.

action. He was partly acquitted and partly condemned, his personal character being upheld. The sentence was a public reprimand and suspension from rank and pay for six months. It was held by the military authorities at home to have been too lenient, and was attributed to regard for Procter's previous good character and conduct. This may well have been the case. There are many instances of officers who, having done good service and shown high fighting qualities, when a particular crisis comes, are found unequal to responsibility and, it may be through temporary loss of health and nerve, break down hopelessly under the strain. Procter was condemned for having been wanting in energy and activity, although he had on previous occasions shown himself conspicuously active and energetic ; he was fully acquitted by the court-martial of any misconduct in the battle, and his whole previous brave career spoke on his behalf. Yet it would have been well for his reputation had he fallen like Brock or Tecumseh in the forefront of his men, instead of finding personal safety in headlong retreat.

Critical position of Vincent.

The situation created by the fights on Lake Erie and Moraviantown was very grave. The lake was now an American lake, all the western end of Ontario was in American hands, and Vincent, again in charge of the British forces on the Niagara frontier—for de Rottenburg had been called back to Kingston—drew off the troops and concentrated them at Burlington Heights. Prevost, when the first news reached him [1], ordered a further retreat, and abandonment of the whole of Upper Canada as far as Kingston, but Vincent and his officers determined to hold their ground, a wise decision as events proved ; and, as the main part of the American forces were transferred to Sackett's Harbour for a great combined movement on Montreal, the post at Burlington Heights was not assailed.

[1] In *Some Account of the Public Life of Sir G. Prevost*, pp. 115–19, it is stated that the instruction to Vincent to fall back on Kingston after Procter's defeat was given under a misunderstanding and was counter-ordered.

Michillimackinac.

There was still one point in the very far West where the British maintained their ground. This was Michillimackinac. After disposing of Procter Harrison wrote that he was sending an expedition to recapture the place, but no steps seem to have been taken for the purpose until the summer of the following year, 1814. Information had reached Prevost that the garrison was in straits for provisions, but the defeat of Barclay's ships had made it difficult to send supplies in the year 1813, and it was not until the next spring that reinforcements and stores reached this far-off outpost. There were two possible routes which avoided Lake Erie and the Detroit river. One was by the Ottawa river and Lake Nipissing, the other was an overland route to the Nottawasaga river, which flows into the end of Georgian bay, and which could be reached from York. On this river a little dépôt was established, and from it, in April, 1814, Colonel McDouall, of the Glengarry regiment, set forth in boats carrying about ninety soldiers, mainly belonging to the Newfoundland regiment, and the much needed supplies. Storm-tossed and endangered by floating ice on Lake Huron, the little expedition, on May 18, contrived to reach Michillimackinac in safety. Some western Indians were also gathered to the fort, and before June ended, McDouall felt himself strong enough to send a detachment to attack a party of Americans who, starting from St. Louis, under the command of a man named Clarke, had established a fort on the banks of the Upper Mississippi, at a place where there was an Indian settlement named Prairie des Chiens. The expedition from Michillimackinac, commanded by an officer named McKay, followed the route up the Fox River and down the Wisconsin, which had been taken by Joliet and Marquette, the first discoverers of the Mississippi, and reaching their destination on July 17, two days later took possession of the American fort, which was surrendered with its guns and garrison, although supported by a gunboat on the river.[1]

The attack on Prairie des Chiens by an expedition from Michillimackinac.

[1] The dispatches giving an account of McKay's expedition are printed in Appendix B to the *Report on the Canadian Archives for* 1887.

Meanwhile the garrison of Michillimackinac, weakened by the absence of McKay and his men, was attacked by an American force sent up from Detroit. It consisted of five ships of the Lake Erie squadron, with over 700 troops on board, commanded by Croghan, the officer who had beaten off Procter from Fort Stephenson. It was an ill-led and ill-assorted expedition. Passing up Lake Huron in July it made for St. Joseph's island, the British post on which had been abandoned. The houses standing on the island were burnt, and then a detachment was sent on to a settlement at Sault Ste Marie. The owner of this settlement, who, with the able-bodied men of the place, had joined McDouall at Michillimackinac, was for some reason specially obnoxious to the Americans, and the place was rifled and looted as by a party of brigands. Before July ended, the vessels reached the island on which the fort of Michillimackinac stood, and on August 4 the troops were landed at the rear of the fort. McDouall had less than 200 men at his command, including Indians, but he marched out to attack the invaders. Compelled at first to fall back for fear of being outflanked, he made, with the Indians leading, a successful counter-attack. The second in command of the Americans, the man who had looted the Sault Ste Marie settlement, was killed with some others, a considerable number were wounded, and the whole force under cover of the ships' guns re-embarked and sailed away. Returning as far as the Nottawasaga river they attacked the British blockhouse there and a schooner which was loading at it ; both were blown up, but the British naval officer in charge, Lieutenant Worsley, made good his escape, and with his men and some stores found his way in boats to Michillimackinac. Two of the American ships were left to blockade the river and prevent provisions being sent to Michillimackinac, the

American expedition against Michillimackinac.

It is beaten off.

McDouall reported that he heard on the 21st of November of Clarke having taken possession of Prairie des Chiens ; but either McDouall was not at Michillimackinac at the time or he came away afterwards, inasmuch as it was in April, 1814, that he was sent up by Prevost.

American ships taken on Lake Huron.

rest went back to Detroit. Shortly afterwards these two ships, the schooners *Tigress* and *Scorpion*, went up Lake Huron and took a position at some distance from each other, not far in either case from St. Joseph's island. It was resolved to attack them, and a party led by Worsley set out for the purpose in boats from Michillimackinac. On the night of September 3, Worsley boarded and took the *Tigress*, then manning the captured vessel, three days later he took her consort. Thus Michillimackinac was relieved from danger of being starved out. It was the first position taken by the British in the war, and it remained in British hands until the war ended. These incidents have been told out of order of time because, with their exception, there was after Procter's defeat in October 1813, no serious fighting further west than the Niagara frontier. Raiding and plundering took place, but with the abandonment of the line of the Detroit, the main scene of action was thenceforward contracted and centred round Niagara, the head of Lake Ontario, and the eastern parts of Canada.

American plan of campaign against Montreal,

In July and August, 1813, the American government was intent upon a large scheme whereby the forces on the Canadian frontier should concentrate on one or other vital point and strike a decisive blow by overwhelming numbers. Correspondence passed between Armstrong, the Secretary of War, and General Wilkinson, who had succeeded General Dearborn, discussing whether the starting-point should be Fort George, from whence the whole peninsula of Ontario should be in the first instance overrun and cleared of its defenders, or whether it should be Sackett's Harbour, and, if Sackett's Harbour, whether the main effort should be directed against Kingston, or whether a combined movement should be made against Montreal, having the indirect advantage of cutting communication between Kingston and Montreal, and thereby severing Kingston from its base of supplies. Wilkinson at first inclined to begin by clearing the peninsula of Ontario from Fort George, as being the safer plan, 'with the intention,'

as he wrote to Armstrong, 'to increase our own confidence, to diminish that of the enemy, and to popularize the war.' After such operations, he continued, 'we . . . like lightning must direct our whole force against Kingston; and, having reduced that place and captured the shipping, we may descend the stream and form a junction with the column of General Hampton in the neighbourhood of Montreal, should the lateness of the season permit.' Armstrong argued that success in the peninsula of Ontario 'leaves the strength of the enemy unbroken; it but wounds the tail of the lion. . . . Kingston is the great dépôt of his resources, and so long as he retains this and keeps open his communication with the sea, he will not want the means of multiplying his naval and other defences, and of reinforcing or renewing the war in the west.' Kingston, therefore, should, he thought, be 'the first and great object of the campaign', but he contended that its reduction would be more easily effected by concentrating on Montreal and cutting communication with Kingston, than by a direct attack on the latter port itself. This plan, on paper a good one, held the field, and it must now be told what steps were taken to carry it out.

including a combined movement from Lake Ontario and Lake Champlain.

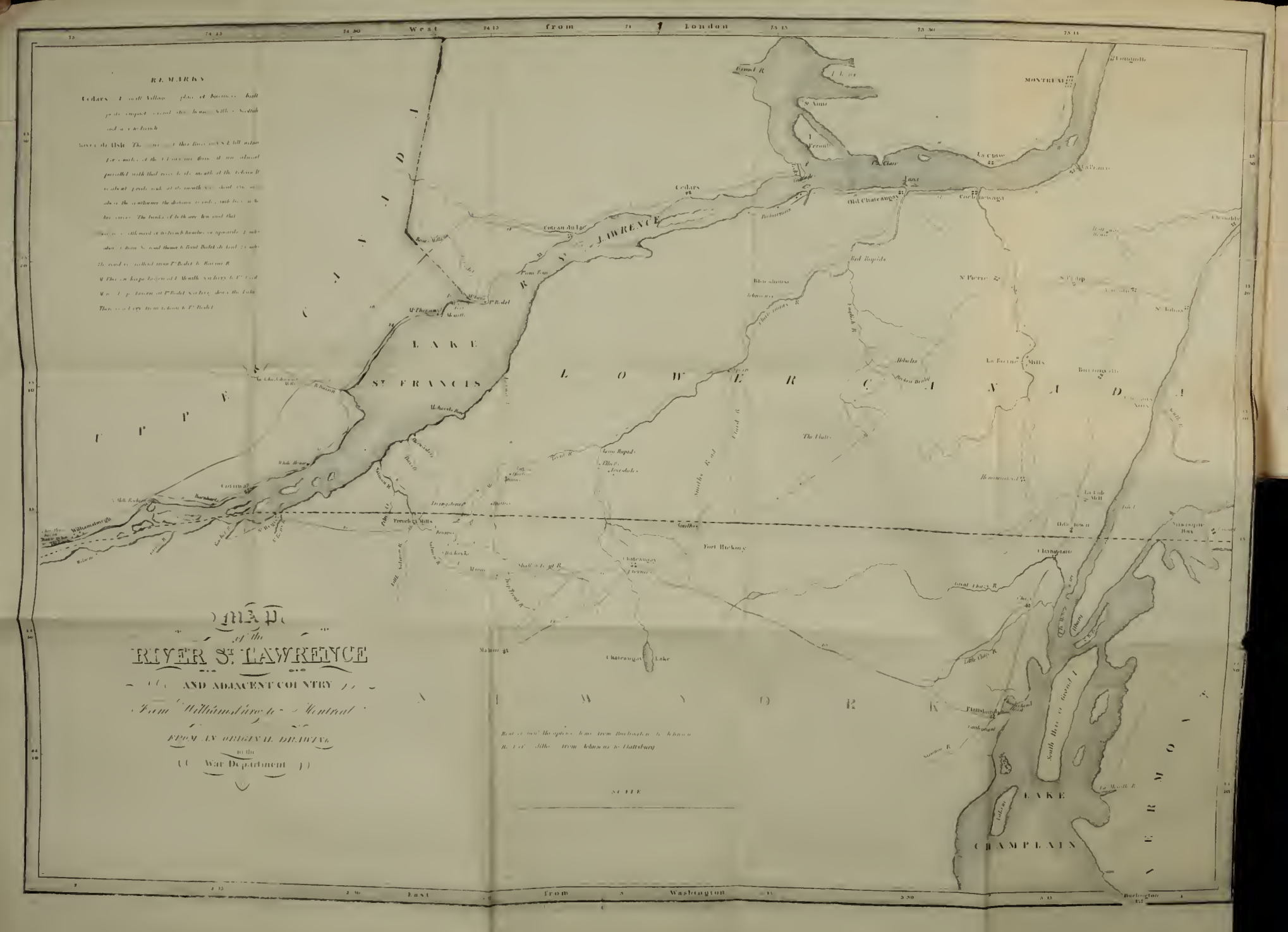
In 1760, Amherst completed the conquest of Canada by concentrating three forces on Montreal. One came up the St. Lawrence from Quebec, one came up the line of Lake Champlain, the third, commanded by Amherst himself, came down the St. Lawrence from Lake Ontario. The Americans now proposed to repeat this plan so far as it included a combined advance from Lake Champlain and Lake Ontario; but Quebec was not in their hands nor likely to be, and friends, not enemies, would reach Montreal from that quarter. Further, all the three forces in Amherst's scheme worked harmoniously under the undisputed leadership of Amherst. In 1813, the American commander on Lake Champlain, Wade Hampton, though nominally subordinate to Wilkinson, resented his leadership, and, as will be seen, the element of hearty co-operation, indispensable if success was to be achieved, was

Jealousy between Hampton and Wilkinson.

wanting. 'General Hampton,' wrote Armstrong to Wilkinson at the beginning of September, 'will go through the campaign cordially and vigorously, but will resign at the end of it.' A commander who meditates resignation is not usually either cordial or vigorous, and General Hampton did not prove to be an exception to the rule.

Wilkinson's movements.

Sackett's Harbour was the point where the invading force, which was to descend the St. Lawrence, was to be gathered; and there Wilkinson arrived on August 20, 1813. On the 21st he wrote to Armstrong that he was going on to Fort George, hoping to draw Prevost after him, that he intended to move down the lake from Niagara on September 15, to be in possession of Kingston or below it on September 26, and that he calculated on General Hampton being at Plattsburg on Lake Champlain, on September 20. All this was after conferring with Commodore Chauncey. He went on to Fort George at the beginning of September, and on the 20th he was still there, having been laid up with sickness, and was making preparations to transport his troops to Sackett's Harbour. Meanwhile Armstrong, the Secretary of War, came up in person to Sackett's Harbour to watch over the evolution of his favourite scheme. Bad weather interfered with the movement of the troops on water, so did the inability of Chauncey to inflict any decisive defeat on Yeo's squadron. October came on and was well advanced before the troops were finally collected at Sackett's Harbour. They were then with difficulty, owing to what Wilkinson termed 'the inexorable winds and rains', transported to Grenadier Island, which lies near the outlet of the St. Lawrence from Lake Ontario, on the American side, about halfway between Sackett's Harbour and Kingston. There seems to have been some question as to whether Kingston should after all be attacked, but British reinforcements, which had arrived there from the Ontario peninsula, put an end to any intention of the kind; and, while Chauncey blockaded or attempted to blockade Yeo's squadron in Kingston harbour, Wilkinson moved on his vanguard and


REMARKS
Cedars
Coteau du Lac
Split Rock
Valleyfield
Beauharnois
Caughnawaga
Chateauguay
Huntingdon
Williamsburgh
Cornwall
Dundee
Hemmingford
Montreal
St Anne
Isle Perrot
Pt Claire
La Chine
Isle Jesus
Isle aux Tourtes
Isle Bizard
Isle Dorval
Isle Cadieux
Isle Ronde
Isle Perrot
Isle Ste Thérèse
Isle aux Noix
Isle Pelée
Isle Lamotte
Isle Grande Ile
Isle Aux Chevreuils
Isle Aux Tourtes
Isle Aux Pommes
Isle Aux Cochons
Isle Aux Fesses
Isle Aux Grues
Isle Aux Noix

artillery to French Creek, about twenty miles down the St. Lawrence on the American shore, near the present village of Clayton. From this point, on November 5, the expedition started down the river, the troops numbering between 6,000 and 9,000 men, and the point where the junction was to be made with Hampton's corps being, according to the original plan, the Isle Perrot, just above Montreal, but, as subsequently determined, St. Regis, higher up the river, where the international boundary meets the St. Lawrence.

He starts down the St. Lawrence from Lake Ontario.

After Macdonell's successful attack on Ogdensburg in February, 1813, the Americans had given little trouble to Canada below Lake Ontario. In July, a British convoy, coming up the river from Montreal to Kingston, had been intercepted among the Thousand Islands, and the captors running their vessels and prizes high up a small creek on the American shore, named Goose Creek, beat off an attempt which was made by British gunboats from Kingston to cut them out. On Lake Champlain, all through the spring and summer, the Americans remained almost inactive, but there were small British successes to be recorded. The Isle aux Noix in the Richelieu river, rather over ten miles from the outlet of Lake Champlain, was an outpost of Canada which had played a prominent part in earlier wars. In the summer of 1813 it was held by a garrison of British regulars under the command of Major Taylor of the 100th regiment, and there were three gunboats at the place which had been built at Quebec. On the early morning of the 3rd of June, first one American vessel and then a second were seen coming down the river as though to attack the post. The three gunboats were ordered out and engaged the American ships, while Taylor landed men on either bank of the river and supplemented the fire of the gunboats by musketry from on shore. The result was that, after three and a half hours' fighting, both the American ships were taken, one having been run aground to prevent her sinking, but being subsequently salved by the British. The Americans on board the ships

Small British successes on the Richelieu river and Lake Champlain.

numbered 100, one was killed, eight were wounded, the rest were taken prisoners. The two ships, named the *Growler* and *Eagle*, were pressed into the British service, being rechristened the *Broke* and *Shannon* in honour of the fight between the *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake* which had just taken place: but these names were shortly afterwards, under orders from home, replaced by the very prosaic names of the *Chubb* and the *Finch*. On July 29, these two vessels and the three gunboats under the command of two British naval officers, one, Captain Everard, being the commander of the British brig *Wasp*, which was at the time lying at Quebec, and the other, Captain Pring, having been sent down by Sir James Yeo from Lake Ontario, set out to raid the American military and naval dépôts on Lake Champlain. A fleet of boats accompanied them, carrying about 900 soldiers, under the command of Colonel Murray. They made for Plattsburg, on the western shore of the lake; on their approach, the American militia at the place disbanded and dispersed; and, unopposed, Murray burnt the barracks and naval dépôt, and destroyed such stores as he could not carry off. The same process was repeated at Saranac, within about three miles of Plattsburg, at Swanton in Missiquoit bay, the north-east corner of Lake Champlain, and at Champlain town or village on the western side, north of Plattsburg, and at the outlet of the lake. Meanwhile Everard, with three of the five armed vessels, stood across the lake from Plattsburg and threatened Burlington, which was then Hampton's head quarters, carrying off four little unarmed ships and being unmolested by the American squadron, which was lying there but not yet ready for action. On the 3rd or 4th of August the raid was over, and the American commodore, Macdonough, subsequently putting out on the lake, reported that the enemy could not be brought to action, 'thus, if not acknowledging our ascendancy on the lake, evincing an unwillingness to determine it.'[1]

[1] Macdonough's dispatch in the printed version is dated September 9, but reads as though the real date was August 9.

Colonel Murray, in reporting upon this expedition, stated that General Hampton had concentrated at Burlington the whole of the regular forces in the vicinity of Lake Champlain, and that they amounted, according to the best information, to about 4,500 men in addition to a large body of militia. Hampton subsequently crossed over to Plattsburg, and encamping close by that place at Cumberland Head, completed his preparations for the coming campaign. Wilkinson, in his first calculations for the combined movement which he and Armstrong had planned, counted on Hampton being at Plattsburg on September 20. Hampton was well up to time, for on that day he crossed the frontier and surprised a small Canadian picket at Odelltown. This was on the direct northern route on the western side of Lake Champlain and the Richelieu river, the objective being the bank of the St. Lawrence immediately opposite Montreal. It was the route which Dearborn had taken as far as Lacolle in the previous autumn, when making a feeble attempt to invade Lower Canada. On that occasion de Salabery, with French Canadian voltigeurs and militia, obstructed the advance; the same brave and vigilant officer was now across Hampton's path. Instead of forcing his way through by weight of numbers—not, it would seem, a difficult task, for the defenders were few and, after not many miles of woodland, open country would have been reached—Hampton retraced his steps on the following day, alleging as a reason for his change of plan want of water on the Odelltown route, owing to an exceptional drought.[1] About a month later both he himself, and General Wilkinson on Lake Ontario, complained of the bad weather. Retreating for some miles parallel to the northern outlet of Lake Champlain by the way by which he had come, Hampton struck into a road which led in a due north-westerly direction from Plattsburg to the Salmon river, and on to the St. Lawrence, a little below St. Regis ; and he followed this road until he reached the Chateauguay river, high up in its course just

Hampton advances into Canada,

[1] This is taken from Christie's account in his *History of Lower Canada*.

and concentrates at the Four Corners of Chateauguay.

beyond a settlement known as the Four Corners of Chateauguay. Here he concentrated his force, which in the middle of October seems to have numbered from 5,000 to 7,000 men. In the meantime, in order to keep the British occupied on the line of Lake Champlain, a detachment of the Americans, on October 12, attacked the village of Missiquoit on Missiquoit bay, on which occasion, according to the account of the American commander, Colonel Clark, 102 Americans took 101 prisoners.

The line of the Chateauguay river.

The head-waters of the Chateauguay are at a considerable distance south of the Four Corners, and the stream runs at first in a northerly direction through two small lakes, passing to the west of the Four Corners, and at some distance to the north-west of that point crossing the international boundary. In Canada the river takes an easterly bend, and flows due north-east parallel to the St. Lawrence, its confluence with that river being directly opposite Lachine on the island of Montreal. After it has turned to the north-east, it is fed by two tributaries on the southern side, the Outard river and, lower down, the English river. On its banks, between the points where these two rivers respectively join the larger stream, the fight of Chateauguay took place. The Four Corners of Chateauguay were so called because four roads converged there; one, by which Hampton had come, led to Lake Champlain ; a second, as already stated, led to the Salmon river ; a third followed the Chateauguay, running first north and then north-east ; a fourth ran due north-east inland of and roughly parallel to the third. From this fourth road a cross-road connected with the third, joining it just below the confluence of the Outard and the Chateauguay ; and, by utilizing at once the third road and the cross-road, Hampton eventually brought his army down and on to the Chateauguay a little higher up than the scene of the battle. As long as Hampton was encamped near the Four Corners, it was not possible for those who were watching his movements to divine by what route he was likely to advance, whether to the Salmon river and the St. Lawrence at St. Regis, whether

along the course of the Chateauguay, or whether along the inland road. De Salabery, with a handful of French Canadians and such few Indians as were to hand, had been charged with the task of moving parallel to the American commander, breaking up and obstructing the roads in his front, and molesting him in every possible way. According to one account, at the beginning of October, de Salabery attacked Hampton's outposts at the Four Corners [1]; and eventually, when it was evident that the line of the American advance was along the Chateauguay, the Canadian leader took up a position on that river about six miles above the confluence of the English river, on the northern bank of the Chateauguay, along which the road ran, his left resting on the river, his front and right guarded by a series of natural ditches or ravines, strengthened by rough barricades; an outwork of fallen trees being constructed across the road rather over a mile in advance of the main defences, in order to give a first halt to the advancing enemy. The weak point of the position was that just below it there was a ford by which, if not securely guarded, the Americans, if they came down the southern bank, could cross and take the defenders in the rear.

De Salabery in command of the Canadians.

On the morning of the 21st of October, Hampton left his encampment near the Four Corners and moved down the Chateauguay. On the 22nd he concentrated the main body of his troops near the mouth of the Outard, on the northern bank of the Chateauguay. On the 23rd and the 24th he completed or reopened the broken road or roads by which he had advanced, and brought up his artillery and stores; and, having established a line of communication with the St. Lawrence as far up as Ogdensburg, in order to be kept in touch with Wilkinson's movements, he matured his scheme of attack on the 25th. One column was to cross the Chateauguay, to advance along its southern bank, to seize the ford and recross in the rear of the enemy: the main force was to advance on the northern bank, through six or seven miles of open country into the

The battle of Chateauguay.

[1] This is taken from Christie's history.

woodland where de Salabery was posted, and carry his position by a frontal attack. The column on the southern bank, under Colonel Purdy, started on the night of the 25th. After it had begun its march, Hampton learnt that no co-operation could as yet be expected from Wilkinson, but it was too late to counter-order the movement, and on the morning of the 26th, the main body, under a tried soldier, General Izard, also moved forward, along the road on the northern bank of the river. De Salabery had under his immediate command, in addition to Indians, between 300 and 400 French Canadians. He had in reserve a militia regiment of 600 French Canadians under the command of Colonel Macdonell, the brave and able Glengarry officer who had taken Ogdensburg in the spring. This regiment had been hurried down from Kingston, where all available troops had been concentrated to oppose Wilkinson, and had come up to de Salabery's position the day before the battle. Lower down the river, and hardly within reach, General De Watteville seems to have been stationed with a few more troops. The first fighting line containing de Salabery's own men, according to Prevost's dispatch, did not exceed 300 white men.

Izard advanced slowly, waiting for the sound of firing on the southern side of the river, which was to be the signal for attack. Between 10 and 11 o'clock in the forenoon his vanguard, as well as the head of Purdy's column on the opposite bank, were seen by a picket guarding a party of Canadian *habitans* who were employed in obstructing the road in front of the first barricade which has already been mentioned. De Salabery brought up his men, and posted them and a small party of Indians in loose order through the woods in front and at the sides of the barricade, with the exception of about one-third of the little force whom he placed further back at right angles to the rest, lining the bank of the river in order to take the Americans on the southern side in flank as they moved on the ford. About 2 o'clock, according to Hampton's report, hearing the sound of guns on the southern side, Izard pushed on rapidly, drove

in the pickets, and threatened the barricade. The Canadians fell back behind it and seem to have begun a further retreat, but de Salabery, standing his ground, made the boy bugler by his side sound a call. Macdonell answered from the reserves and moved up his men. The bugles, the cheers of the Canadians, and the whoops of the Indians sounded through the woods as though a large army was coming on ; and the Americans thereupon came to a stand in front of the timber breastwork, waiting for further evidence of their comrades on the southern bank of the river. Purdy, it seems, had wandered and scrambled through the night, missing his way or led astray by traitorous or patriotic guides, and when sunrise came he had only covered six miles. Towards the middle of the day he made for the ford. He was momentarily checked by a party of the local militia. Driving them off, he found in his front a company of Macdonell's regiment, whom Macdonell had sent across the river. Again overpowering them, after a short check, he moved on down the bank, when, from the opposite side, de Salabery's men, who had been posted for the purpose, opened a destructive fire all along his flank. This decided the day. The Americans on the southern bank broke in confusion, and taking cover in the forest here and there, mistook friends for foes, fired on each other, and ceased to be an organized force. Learning of their discomfiture, Izard and Hampton no longer pressed their own attack, but drew back the troops for some three miles, and the fight of Chateauguay was over.

The Americans are defeated,

Purdy's broken force meanwhile also retreated, tried to cross the river and rejoin Hampton, failed, and encamped in the forest where, according to Purdy's account, they were again subjected to a night attack. Eventually on the day after the battle, the two columns were reunited. The American casualties were considerably over a hundred; the Canadian loss, all told, was only twenty-five. The actual fighting had hardly amounted to more than a skirmish. None the less the results were those of a great and decisive victory. With the most trifling loss a hand-

and retreat.

full of men had repulsed an invasion, broken up a combination, and given security to Montreal. For Hampton, whether because he was faint of heart or because his heart was not in a campaign [1] which had been devised by others than himself, made no further forward movement, and did not even hold his ground. Having encamped on the night of the battle three miles back, two days later, on the 28th, he began his retreat to the Four Corners, with the Indians hanging on his rear. On November 1 he wrote from the Four Corners a report of what had taken place. On the night of the 7th, while still at the Four Corners, he received a dispatch from Wilkinson, written the day before from the St. Lawrence above Ogdensburg, and suggesting a junction of the two forces at St. Regis. On the following day he wrote back, dwelling upon 'the rawness and sickliness' of his troops, whom he described as 'sadly dispirited and fallen off' after their fatigues, and upon the shortness of his provisions, for Wilkinson had in his letter suggested that Hampton should forward two or three months' supplies by the safest route. Hampton stated that, if he advanced, he would have to depend upon Wilkinson for feeding his men, and concluded that his best course would be to fall back upon his main dépôt at Plattsburg, with a view to a future forward movement towards the St. Lawrence. Accordingly, on the 11th of November, he marched back to Lake Champlain and took no further part in the operations. Wilkinson received Hampton's letter on the 12th of November, the day after the fight at Chrystler's, and expressed his indignation at his colleague's conduct in no measured terms, in a letter to Hampton himself, in a general order in which he referred to 'the extraordinary, unexampled and, it appears, unwarrantable conduct of General Hampton in refusing to join this army with a division of 4,000 men under his command', and in

Wilkinson's indignation at Hampton's retreat.

[1] Purdy insinuates that Hampton was given to drinking. A similar allegation was made in regard to Wilkinson. It is a common charge when generals fail, but the various reports of Hampton's conduct at the time, and after the retreat to Plattsburg, point to his having been for some reason or other hopelessly wrong-headed or inefficient.

a letter to the Secretary of War. To the latter he wrote, 'The game was in view and, had he performed the junction directed, would have been ours in eight or ten days. But he chose to recede, in order to co-operate, and my dawning hopes and the hopes and honour of the army were blasted.' The whole proceedings had been an object-lesson in want of co-operation. Wilkinson and Hampton had failed to combine: the two columns of Hampton's army had failed to combine also. To Canada the result was peculiarly important from a political point of view. The fight at Chateauguay had on the Canadian side been entirely a fight of French Canadians. Their time had now come: they had stood up against invasion and had prevailed. Hitherto the cause of Canada had been mainly in the keeping of British troops and settlers of British birth; but at Chateauguay only French Canadians were engaged, and this fight proved to demonstration that the war was a national war for Canada [1].

Chateauguay a French-Canadian victory.

Starting down the St. Lawrence on November 5, Wilkinson, late on that night, reached a point on the American shore about seven miles above Ogdensburg. There he remained through the 6th, writing on that evening the letter to General Hampton which has already been mentioned, and issuing to the inhabitants of Canada a short proclamation, moderate and dignified in tone, in which he promised protection to all who did not take up arms against the Americans. Carefully worded as it was, it had little effect, for in a later dispatch he referred to 'the active universal hostility of the male inhabitants of the country'. Below him, and opposite Ogdensburg, was Prescott with Fort Wellington, whose garrison had been

Wilkinson's movements on the St. Lawrence.

[1] The different accounts of the battle of Chateauguay are conflicting and confusing to an extraordinary degree. It is only possible to piece together what seem to have been the main features. A plan of the fight, with an account, will be found in Bouchette's *Topographical Description of the Province of Lower Canada*, valuable, as the author was Surveyor-General of the Province, and the book was written within two years of the event. He locates the spot as being in the Division of South Georgetown.

strengthened by two companies of the 49th hastily sent down from Kingston. His flotilla could not safely pass the guns of the fort in the daytime. The troops, therefore, or most of them were landed with the ammunition: on the night of the 6th[1] the boats, with muffled oars, dropped down along the American shore, and on the following morning were rejoined below Ogdensburg and Prescott by the army which had marched by or through Ogdensburg overland. On the same afternoon a force of about 1,200 men was landed on the Canadian side, to march down parallel with the boats and clear the way. A further body of mounted men was landed on the same shore on the 8th; and on the 9th the whole expedition reached a point near the head of the Long Sault rapids, hard by the farm of a Canadian settler of the name of Chrystler. The Long Sault rapids are nine miles in length, and at their foot on the Canadian side is the town of Cornwall. This was held at the time of Wilkinson's expedition by a small garrison of militia commanded by Dennis, an officer of the 49th, who had distinguished himself at the battle of Queenston Heights. Over against Cornwall was St. Regis, where Wilkinson hoped to meet Hampton. At the head of the rapids, General Brown, the defender of Sackett's Harbour, was landed with a force of 2,000 to 2,500 men, and on the 10th marched down the Canadian shore. His march was delayed by skirmishing with Dennis and his militia detachment, who broke the bridges and held the Americans in check long enough to enable the stores at Cornwall to be removed, and it was not until the morning of the 11th that Brown reached a point named Barnharts, a little above Cornwall. The flotilla was waiting at the head of the rapids until intelligence came from General Brown that he had cleared the bank, and meanwhile most of the remaining force on the boats had been landed on the 9th,

He lands troops on the Canadian side of the river below Prescott.

[1] The accounts generally give the night of the 7th, but Wilkinson, in his letter to Hampton, written on the evening of the 6th, says, 'I shall pass Prescott to-night,' and a comparison of the dates shows that the boats passed on the night of the 6th or early morning of the 7th.

under General Boyd, to protect the rear of the expedition against a British force which was following it, Wilkinson himself remaining on board incapacitated by sickness.

A British force under Colonel Morrison follows Wilkinson down stream.

Chauncey's blockade of Kingston Harbour had proved very ineffective. Before the Americans left French Creek, some British vessels had made their way out of Kingston and were barking and biting at the tail of the expedition. After Wilkinson started, the regulars at Kingston, consisting of the 89th regiment and of the 49th, with the exception of the two companies which had already been sent on to Prescott, were embarked on gunboats and bateaux in charge of a skilful naval officer, Captain Mulcaster, and, eluding Chauncey, made the best of their way down stream. Chauncey indeed, either on that day or on the evening before, seems to have left Kingston and gone some way up the lake to lie in wait for some of Yeo's vessels which he had heard had gone up the lake with reinforcements. The little British force which followed Wilkinson numbered under 600 men when it left Kingston, with two six-pounder guns. The 89th were not up to full strength, and the 49th were sadly weakened by the sickness which had been prevalent on the Niagara frontier, from which that regiment had at length been withdrawn. The commander of the troops was Colonel Morrison, of the 89th, and with him was Harvey, the hero of Stoney Creek. They reached Prescott on the 8th and picked up most of the garrison at that place, the two companies of the 49th, some Canadian Fencibles and Voltigeurs, a small party of Indians, and another six-pounder gun. The whole force now numbered rather over 800 men. Re-embarking in small boats they passed on down stream on the 9th, landed thirteen miles below Prescott and marched along the Canadian shore, Mulcaster's gunboats keeping by them on the river. On the 10th they began to come into touch with the American rearguard, and on that day Morrison and Mulcaster crossed the river to a village named Hamilton, where some stores captured from the British had been deposited, and made an agreement with the

leading inhabitants for the restoration of the stores and the delivery of any property which belonged to the government of the United States. This agreement, it may be noted, was not carried out, with the result that early in the following February the plundered stores, then deposited at some little distance from Hamilton, were recovered by a party which crossed the icebound river from Cornwall and carried them off by night.

The battle of Chrystler's Farm.

On the morning of the 11th, while Wilkinson, having heard from Brown, was giving orders for the American flotilla to run the rapids, Mulcaster's gunboats opened fire, and at the same time Boyd reported that Morrison was pressing him on land. Wilkinson accordingly instructed Boyd to turn and attack, and in the middle of the day on the 11th the fight at Chrystler's took place. The battle was of a somewhat unusual character, for an advancing army was fighting a rearguard action. The numbers on either side were, as usual, overestimated by the enemy. Morrison led into action slightly over 800 men, Boyd had about 1,800 in three columns, including a regiment of dragoons : and later in the fight a reinforcement of 600 men joined him. Some of the American artillery, too, according to Boyd's account, did not come up until much of the fighting was over. The field was comparatively open, more so than in most of the battles of this war, and there was more generalship shown, especially on the British side, than had usually been the case. Morrison, probably under Harvey's advice, had chosen his ground well. He rested his right on the river, his left on a pine-wood, the intervening distance of open ground being about 700 yards. Except that he was fighting in the open, his position resembled that taken up by Procter at Moraviantown, both flanks being protected by nature. Next the river were three companies of the 89th with one gun ; then a little in front, athwart of the road, were stationed the flank companies of the 49th with some Canadians and another gun ; then on the left, thrown back and reaching to the wood, the remainder of the two regiments were placed and the third

gun. In the wood were the Canadian Voltigeurs and Indians, whose duty it was to skirmish in advance and draw the Americans on to the main British position. The British troops, not being drawn up in one level line, were able to support each other wherever the enemy's attack was pressed. The fight began by the skirmishers being driven in on the British left, which was followed by an attack in force upon that side of the position about 2.30 p.m. It was beaten off, and Boyd next tried to outflank and crush the right—the side nearest the river. The advanced party of the 49th made a counter-charge for one of the enemy's guns, but was pulled up by a threatening movement of the American cavalry who endangered their right flank and rear. To meet this danger the men of the 89th, nearest the river, came forward, beat off the dragoons and took the gun. This decided the battle. The Americans, after rather over two hours' fighting, retreated, and the infantry were put on board the boats and carried three or four miles down stream, while the cavalry and artillery followed on land. The next day the whole of the American forces were again concentrated at the bottom of the rapids.

The Americans beaten off.

Morrison's troops occupied for the night the position which the Americans had held. Their casualties had been rather under 200, the Americans had lost over 300 in killed and wounded, including Brigadier-General Covington, who was mortally wounded, and Morrison reported having taken upwards of a hundred prisoners. The British had clearly the best of the engagement, but, had Hampton met Wilkinson at St. Regis, the prime object of the expedition would not have been affected by the fight at Chrystler's Farm. No sooner, however, had the expedition reached the foot of the rapids on the day after the battle, than one of Hampton's officers brought to Wilkinson the letter announcing Hampton's retreat to Lake Champlain, and it was evident that the attempt on Montreal must be given up. Morrison meanwhile was following up the pursuit with all the sound members of his

Wilkinson abandons the attempt on Montreal.

little force, and on the 13th Wilkinson carried over his whole army to the American side of the river and placed them in winter quarters at French Mills and Malone on the Salmon river. There they remained entrenched until the middle of the following February, when the encampments were broken up, Brown, with part of the force, was sent to Sackett's Harbour, and the rest under General Wilkinson himself moved back to Plattsburg on Lake Champlain, harried on their retreat by a strong detachment of regulars and Canadians who crossed the St. Lawrence on the ice and carried off stores and provisions. Thus ended the campaign against Montreal. It had been a miserable fiasco, mainly owing to General Hampton's misconduct. If the Americans had still entertained any hope of conquering Canada, it must have been entirely dissipated after the collapse of the combined movement. But it had been an anxious time for Canada, and in reporting Morrison's victory at Chrystler's Farm Prevost wrote that the exertions which the Canadians and his handful of regular troops had made for the defence of the country might degenerate into indifference, unless the support received from the mother-country was equal to the magnitude of the stake.

General McClure in charge of the American forces on the Niagara frontier.

Wilkinson's campaign had drawn off leaders, men, and public attention from the Niagara frontier. There a militia officer, Brigadier-General George McClure, was left to command what remained of the American force, having his head quarters at Fort George. In a short time he was superseded by Harrison, who had come down Lake Erie from Detroit, but in the middle of November Harrison was recalled to the west[1], and McClure resumed command. Before leaving, Harrison charged McClure to have a vigilant eye on the disaffected part of the inhabitants, as he termed them, and in doing so, to make use of the 'zeal, ability and local knowledge' of Colonel Willcocks, of whom

[1] Harrison speaks distinctly of 'Being ordered to return to the Westward'. McClure says that Harrison was ordered to Sackett's Harbour with his army.

mention has already been made. In other words, American dealings with loyal Canadians in this part of Ontario were to be guided by a Canadian traitor. The instructions were liberally interpreted. Harrison had laid down that it would no doubt be McClure's wish, as it was his duty, to guard the residents as far as possible against oppression, but McClure's view of his duty as well as, it would seem, his personal inclination differed from those of his superior officer. He had few regulars left with him and the militia, many of whom were about to receive their discharge and who became, according to his own account, ungovernable, laid heavy hands on the country round, stimulated by Willcocks and such following as he possessed. Colonel Murray, who commanded the British outposts, spoke of these Canadian renegades as 'a lawless banditti, composed of the disaffected of the country, organized under the direct influence of the American government, who carried terror and dismay into every family'.

Ill-treatment of the loyal Canadians.

Harrison, before he left Fort George in the middle of November, had not heard of Hampton's retreat, of the fight at Chrystler's, and of the abandonment of the expedition on the St. Lawrence. Accordingly, in giving instructions to McClure he contemplated that the British troops would be withdrawn from the peninsula of Ontario and would be mainly concentrated at Kingston, having the right of their line at York with possibly a small command at Burlington Heights as the extreme British outpost in the west. He was mistaken in his calculations. The British commander Vincent had determined not to retreat from Burlington. There he held his ground and faced McClure. De Rottenburg had gone down to Kingston, taking with him the 49th and one other regiment, but the 100th regiment had come up to the front, and the remnant of the 41st which had escaped from the disaster at Moraviantown was also united to Vincent's small force. The Americans took up their position at Twenty Mile Creek and ravaged the country, but about the end of November Vincent allowed Colonel Murray, a good bold officer of the Harvey

Colonel Murray advances towards Niagara.

type, to move forward as far as Forty Mile Creek. McClure fell back, Murray moved on first to Twenty Mile Creek, then to St. Catharine's, and McClure retired into Fort George. With his dwindling force out of hand the American commander did not feel himself able to hold Fort George, and determined to abandon the fort and retreat across the river. Early in October he had obtained an order from Armstrong, the American Secretary of War, worded as follows: 'Understanding that the defence of the post committed to your charge may render it proper to destroy the town of Newark, you are hereby directed to apprise the inhabitants of this circumstance and to invite them to remove themselves and their effects to some place of greater safety.' Armstrong had, after issuing this order, been, it would seem, at Fort George, but the order had not been modified or withdrawn. When there was no occasion to use it, for he had already decided to withdraw from Fort George, McClure proceeded to put it into effect. Newark was an attractive little settlement. Bouchette, writing two years later, says that it 'had increased to about 200 neat and well-built houses, with a church, courthouse and one or two public buildings'. It had peculiar interest as being the first seat of the Legislature in Upper Canada. Here the United Loyalists had begun to make laws for their new home. The snow was lying on the ground when, at dusk on December 10, McClure gave notice that the town would be burnt down. He asserted that he gave twelve hours' warning, but this seems to have been untrue, for on the same night the whole village was destroyed. Most of the accounts state that the village contained 150 houses, and that 149 of them were burnt, some 400 women and children being turned out of doors to face the winter night, while their homes were wrecked before their eyes. It was an act of wanton brutality, one of those deeds for which there are long memories, and McClure's own countrymen condemned it as well as his enemies.

The burning of Newark.

Retribution followed speedily. Within two days

McClure hurried across the river, and Murray and his men occupied Fort George, taking tents, stores and some guns, and finding the fortifications stronger than when the position had been previously in British hands. Almost immediately afterwards a new British commander appeared on the scene. This was Gordon Drummond. Drummond, with another officer, Major-General Phineas Riall, who had served in the West Indies, had reached Canada from England in November; but, while Wilkinson's operations were still on hand, he had been detained in Lower Canada. Moving on to Kingston and York he assumed the administration of Upper Canada in place of de Rottenburg on December 13, and immediately proceeded to the Niagara frontier, where he took over the command from Vincent, finding the British forces in possession of Fort George. Drummond was at this time rather over forty years of age; he had entered the army very early, and in 1794 had become Lieutenant-Colonel of the 8th regiment, the first battalion of which served in Canada throughout the war. With this regiment he had seen much active service in the Netherlands, in the West Indies under Abercromby, and under Abercromby again in Egypt and at the battle of Alexandria. Born at Quebec, he had gone out to Canada again on the staff in 1808. He had gone home in 1811, and in 1813, now a Lieutenant-General, he was sent out once more as second in command to Prevost. A firm, trained soldier, he stands second to Brock on the British side among the men who held high command in Canada throughout this war.

The British reoccupy Fort George.

Gordon Drummond takes command of the British forces in Upper Canada.

No sooner had he come up to Niagara than Murray laid before him a plan for attacking the American Fort Niagara on the opposite side of the river. The plan was approved and, boats having been brought up overland from Burlington bay, on the night of December 18 the attack was made. Between 500 and 600 men, the majority belonging to the 100th regiment, were taken across the river on that night and landed about three miles above the fort; and about four o'clock in the morning

Fort Niagara taken by the British.

Murray, who was in command, directed an advance upon it. The leading party surprised two pickets and the sentries, from whom they obtained the watchword; and, while one detachment stormed the eastern demi-bastion of the fort, the main body of the troops rushed the main gate which had been left open for the change of guard. The garrison poured out to meet the attack, but Murray's men went in with the bayonet, and after a few minutes' fighting the fort was taken. The Americans lost sixty-five killed and over 300 prisoners. A large number of guns and an accumulation of stores fell into British hands, and some Canadian non-combatants, who had been carried off and imprisoned by McClure's orders, were released. The British loss was trifling, about a dozen killed and wounded. Well conceived and admirably carried out, the attack had robbed the Americans of the historic fort which commanded the outlet of the Niagara river to Lake Ontario, and which had, hitherto, not been seriously assailed. It was held by the British throughout the remaining stages of the war.

Drummond sweeps the whole American bank of the Niagara river.

A good general follows up a success, and Drummond had this merit. As soon as the fort had been taken, on the 19th, Riall, with 500 regulars, was thrown across the river against Lewiston; a detachment of American militia was beaten off by a party of Indians who had crossed in advance; two guns, some stores and ammunition were taken, Lewiston was burnt, some neighbouring villages were burnt, Fort Schlosser was destroyed, and Riall advanced up the river within ten miles of Buffalo, until a broken bridge intercepted his march, when he returned and recrossed to Queenston. McClure had not been at Niagara when the fort was taken, and writing from Buffalo on December 22 he attributed the disaster to gross neglect on the part of the officer in charge of the fort. He drew a lurid picture of the 'horrid slaughter' committed by the British troops on entering the fort and of inhuman butchery in the villages 'by savages headed by British officers painted'. He reported that he had

called out the militia and that Buffalo was perfectly secure. He was not secure himself, nor was Buffalo. He resigned his command to Major-General Hall, and in a few days the latter was in straits. On December 28 Drummond, moving up the river on the Canadian side, fixed his head quarters at Chippawa above the falls. On the night of the 29th, Riall and some 600 men with a party of Indians were sent across the river, landing at midnight about two miles below Black Rock. Surprising an American picket and seizing a bridge on the way to Black Rock, Riall held his ground against counter-attacks till daylight, when the Royal Scots, about 800 strong, with some dragoons were also passed over the river above Black Rock. Some of the boats grounded and the landing was disputed with somewhat heavy loss to the British; but, as Riall advanced from below the fort, the Americans gave way, and the position of Black Rock was taken. Marching on, Riall again encountered some resistance before Buffalo, but again the Americans were dispersed, and after taking some guns, the British commander burnt to the ground Black Rock, Buffalo, the stores which they contained, and three vessels which were aground at Buffalo Creek. Part of the force then moved back down the river, destroying all the remaining cover and, when the British returned to the Canadian side, retaining only Fort Niagara, the whole of the American frontier from one end of the Niagara river to the other was a blackened wilderness. This was the retribution for the burning of Newark. 'The flourishing village of Buffalo,' wrote General Hall, 'is laid in ruins. The Niagara frontier now lies open and naked to our enemies.' The British casualties in the engagements were over a hundred. Riall took 130 prisoners and estimated the American killed and wounded at from 300 to 400, but this was probably an excessive estimate. The campaign of 1813 now closed, Drummond's troops went into winter quarters at Fort Niagara, St. David's, Burlington Heights, and York; and Prevost issued a lengthy general order, the moral of which was that the recent

Close of the campaign.

occurrences would not have taken place but for the burning of Newark, and that it rested with the American government to decide whether the war should be conducted in future in such a manner as to render similar acts of retaliation unnecessary.

Naval duels in 1813.

During 1813 the naval duels between British and American vessels continued. Out of five engagements of the kind which are specially recorded, the Americans were victorious in three. Towards the end of February the American ship *Hornet* encountered the British brig *Peacock*, off the mouth of the Demerara River. The latter ship was, according to the accounts of the day, good for show, as befitted her name; but the men, as was the case on board many other British ships at this time, had not been well trained in gunnery. The fight was very short, only a matter of fifteen to twenty-five minutes, but it was very severe while it lasted. The British captain was killed, the *Peacock* struck her colours and sank almost immediately afterwards. The captain of the *Hornet*, Captain Lawrence, was shortly afterwards given the command of a larger vessel, the *Chesapeake*.

The *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake*.

In May the *Chesapeake* was lying in Boston harbour, fitting out for sea, while off the harbour was the British frigate *Shannon*, commanded by Captain Broke. On June 1, the anniversary of Howe's victory at Ushant, Broke sent an elaborate challenge to Lawrence to fight the ships in single combat, and before the challenge could be received, the *Chesapeake* stood out to sea and met the *Shannon*.[1] About half-past five in the afternoon the fight took place. The two frigates were well matched in strength, but Broke had a fine well-trained crew, probably superior to the men on the *Chesapeake*. After two or three broadsides the *Chesapeake* fell foul of the *Shannon*. Broke ordered his men to board the American ship, and

[1] The account of the senior surviving officer of the *Chesapeake* runs: 'On Tuesday, June 1, at 8 a.m. we unmoored ship and at Meridian ... proceeded on a cruise. A ship was then in sight in the offing, which had the appearance of a ship of war, and which, from information received from pilot boats and craft, we believed to be the British frigate *Shannon*. We made sail in chase and cleared ship for action.'

in hardly more than fifteen minutes from the time when the first shot was fired the *Chesapeake* was taken. Short as the fight had been, the casualties were very heavy. Lawrence was killed, Broke was badly wounded: there were seventy killed and wounded on the *Shannon*, on the *Chesapeake* double that number. The fight was memorable because, without superior force, the British victory was so dramatic, so speedy, and so complete, and because the *Chesapeake* was carried off to Halifax under the eyes of the citizens of Boston: but the importance which from that time to this has been attached to the fight between the *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake* is the measure of the respect which the fighting qualities of the American seamen had inspired in the British navy. At the beginning of August, two small ships, on the British side the *Dominica*, on the American side the *Decatur*, encountered each other off the southern coasts of the United States, and the *Dominica* was boarded and taken, only fifteen out of a crew of about eighty not having been killed or wounded. A few days later, off the coast of Ireland, the British ship *Pelican* fought and took the American ship *Argus*, which had been taking prizes in St. George's Channel, for even the waters of the United Kingdom were not secure against the American sailors. In September, off the coast of Maine, the British brig *Boxer* was taken after a hard fight by the American brig *Enterprise*.

British sea-power on the Atlantic coast of the United States.

These single-ship engagements were only incidents in the naval war of the time, and meanwhile the British sea-power in more systematic fashion was making itself felt on the American coasts. In March Rear-Admiral Cockburn with a small squadron appeared in Chesapeake bay, where he was subsequently joined by his superior officer, Admiral Warren, from Bermuda. The shores and estuaries of the bay were harried, stores and ships were carried off, and, when resistance was experienced, the places were wrecked. On one occasion, at Hampton, a band of soldiers, foreigners in the British service, who took the name of Independent Foreigners or Canadian Chasseurs, though

they were not of Canadian origin, committed excesses on the inhabitants and were removed from active service, their conduct having with good reason brought discredit on the expedition with which they were associated. Otherwise the Americans seem to have had little valid ground for complaint in Cockburn's and Warren's proceedings. A year later, in August, 1814, Vice-Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane, who had succeeded Warren, notified to the American government that he had been called upon by the Governor-General of Canada to exact reprisals for the destruction wrought by the Americans in Upper Canada. In his reply Monroe, who was Madison's Secretary of State, referred to 'the wanton desolation that was committed at Havre de Grace and at Georgetown early in the spring of 1813. These villages,' he alleged, 'were burnt and ravaged by the naval forces of Great Britain, to the ruin of their unarmed inhabitants'. But it does not appear that these and other settlements in Chesapeake bay were destroyed without provocation or armed resistance, though there may have been, as in all campaigns there must be, instances in which the ordinary usages of war were transgressed. The net result of the expedition was that the meaning of war was brought home to the citizens of the United States through the invasion of their own shores; and the suffering entailed, coupled with the want of success in Canada, where the Americans themselves were invaders, deepened the strong feeling which existed in the Northern states against this war.

Anti-war feeling in the New England States.

There was abundant evidence of that feeling in the course of the year 1813. Martin Chittenden, one of the representatives of Vermont in the American Congress in 1809, had corresponded in that year with John Henry, when the latter was collecting information for Sir James Craig as to the trend of political feeling in the United States. He had cast his vote against the war, and had subsequently been made Governor of Vermont. In November, 1813, he took the strong step of ordering back into Vermont some of the militia of that state, who were

doing duty in the state of New York, on the ground that they were required and ought to be employed for the defence and protection of their own state. The Vermont officers, to whom his order was addressed, flatly refused to comply with it ; but the fact that it was issued showed that the Chief Magistrate of Vermont was not impressed with the national character of the war. A more striking illustration of this feeling was given in a remonstrance addressed to Congress by the Legislature of Massachusetts in the previous June. Massachusetts, the very hearth and home of American civil liberties, and at the same time the most concerned in sea-going traffic, could speak with a stronger voice than any other state, and most outspoken was its protest. 'No state in the Union can have a greater interest or feel a stronger desire to protect commerce and maintain the legitimate rights of seamen, than this Commonwealth. Owners of one third of all the navigation, and probably furnishing nearly one half of all the native seamen of the United States, we are better enabled to appreciate the extent of their sufferings, and, it must also be presumed, to sympathize with them more sincerely, than the citizens of states destitute of commerce, and whose sons are not engaged in its prosecution.' Yet, in the face of President Madison's declaration that the war turned on British interference with American shipping, Massachusetts, pointing to the withdrawal of the British Orders in Council, denounced the declaration of war as premature, and perseverance in the war as improper, impolitic and unjust. It was a war waged by a free people in co-operation with the French emperor, who was attempting to destroy the liberties of Europe. It was a war of invasion open to the charge of having been undertaken in the lust of conquest ; and it was a war in which the Southern states of the Republic had dictated to the Northern, having been given under the Union an unequal proportion of political power. The South had inspired the policy, whereas on the North had fallen the main burden of misery caused by the war, the injury to com-

Remonstrance of the Legislature of Massachusetts.

merce wrought not only by the acts of the enemy, but also, and in a greater degree, by prohibitions, embargoes, and non-intercourse acts imposed by the Federal government, and by the loss of the fisheries which had given subsistence to thousands of New England citizens and been the nursery of the sailors of the Northern states.

It was not a pleasant outlook for President Madison, who had been re-elected for a second term in December, 1812. Though American sailors had well upheld the honour of their country, though Perry had dominated Lake Erie and, with Harrison, recovered Detroit, though York had been twice taken, the Niagara frontier had been swept of the Americans, the invasion of Montreal had collapsed in ridicule, the conquest of Canada was further off than ever, in Europe Napoleon was tottering to his fall, the home coasts of the United States were being stricken and blockaded, and—most dangerous result of all—the line of cleavage between North and South in the Republic was becoming more accentuated.

In a message to Congress on December 17, 1813, the President spoke of 'the daily testimonies of increasing harmony throughout the nation', but he knew, and the British government knew, that this harmony was far to seek. On the British side, in fact, there had been a policy of differentiating between the Northern states on the one hand, and the Middle and Southern states on the other. Though it was the commerce of the North that principally suffered through the war, for in the North there was most commerce to suffer, it was against the shores of Chesapeake bay, and further south, that the efforts of the British warships were mainly directed. The *Annual Register* for 1813[1] states that, on March 30, in that year, the Prince Regent issued a public notification to the effect that the necessary measures had been taken for blockading the ports and harbours of New York, Charleston, Port Royal, Savannah, and the River Mississippi. 'These were additional to the blockades of the Chesapeake and the Dela-

The British Government differentiates between the Northern and the Southern states of the Union.

[1] P. 179.

ware,' says the account, and no mention is made of blockade on the New England coasts. By a British Order in Council, dated October 26, 1812, the importation of specified articles into British ports in the West Indies and South America was permitted, under licence, and subject to instructions from the government, in the case of any unarmed ship not belonging to France or to a country belonging to or annexed by France. The Order in Council did not prohibit importation in American vessels, although the United States were then at war with Great Britain. But in the confidential instructions to the West Indian governors, which accompanied the Order in Council, and which were dated November 9, 1812, it was laid down that importations were to be confined to vessels of friendly powers, unless embarrassment would be caused by the restriction. Then followed the words—'Whatever importations are proposed to be made under the Order from the United States of America should be by your licences confined to the ports in the Eastern states exclusively, unless you have reason to suppose that the object of the order would not be fulfilled if licences are not also granted for importations from other ports in the United States'. These instructions clearly differentiated between New England and the Southern states in favour of the former. The Order in Council was proclaimed by the Governor of Bermuda on January 14, 1813, and appeared in the *Bermuda Gazette* two days later; and the confidential instructions filtered through to the United States by way of the West Indian island of St. Croix, then in British hands. They called forth what the Governor of Bermuda spoke of as 'querulous and petulant sentiments' from President Madison. In a message dated February 24, 1813, the President laid the documents before Congress with the following comments: 'The policy now proclaimed to the world introduces into her (Great Britain's) modes of warfare a system equally distinguished by the deformity of its features and the depravity of its character, having for its object to dissolve the ties

of allegiance and the sentiments of loyalty in the adversary nation, and to seduce and separate its component parts the one from the other.' To meet the insidious British policy the President proposed to prohibit all exportation from American ports under special licences and all exportation in foreign bottoms, 'few of which,' he said, 'are actually employed, whilst multiplying counterfeits of their flags and papers are covering and encouraging the navigation of the enemy.' Of this latter fact, the carrying on of trade between New England and the West Indies under foreign flags, there was, the Governor of Bermuda wrote, daily evidence. By hook or crook the New Englanders did not intend, if they could help it, that a war, to which a large proportion of them objected on principle, should utterly ruin their commerce. Reading the protest of the Massachusetts Legislature, which has been quoted above, it is impossible not to regret that the history of this war was not better known in England in past years. Had there been full and abiding knowledge of the facts of the war and of the division of feeling with regard to it at the time in the United States, public opinion in the United Kingdom would hardly have been so pronounced in favour of the Southern states, when the great struggle between the North and the South took place; and men might have remembered that when last Great Britain and the United States had been at war, the New England states had a strong good word for Great Britain.

First overtures for peace.

Though Madison vehemently upheld the righteousness of the war on the American side and encouraged his people to stand fast in it, he had not rejected an offer made by the Emperor of Russia in the spring of 1813 to mediate between the two parties, and, as will be told hereafter, commissioners were sent to Europe to carry on negotiations. Great Britain, however, refused to accept Russian mediation, while offering to treat directly with the United States, provided that her maritime rights were respected. Meanwhile the war went on. The prospects of Great Britain were far brighter at the end of 1813 than a year

previously. The retreat from Moscow had done its work, Leipsic had been fought and Vittoria, the allies were over the Rhine, Wellington had forced the passage of the Nive, and France, so long the invader, was now in turn invaded. Yet the terrible strain of men and money on the long-suffering British people was not relaxed, and but four regiments of the line reinforced the defenders of Canada during the year 1813, two of them, de Watteville's and de Meuron's,[1] being foreign corps in British pay, similar to the Hessians in the War of American Independence, and the German Legion at the time of the Crimean War.

Brighter outlook for Great Britain.

[1] These two regiments appear in the *Army List* for 1816, but not in that for 1817. In the latter year the officers are given as on 'Foreign half-pay', and the regiments apparently had been disbanded. De Watteville's regiment had 'Maida' and 'Peninsula' on its colours.

CHAPTER III

1814–1815

Meeting of the Legislature of Lower Canada.

On January 13, 1814, the Legislature of Lower Canada met again at Quebec, and sat until March 17. The Governor and the Assembly mutually congratulated each other upon the events of the late campaign, the Assembly pointedly alluding to Prevost's 'just and liberal policy towards His Majesty's Canadian subjects'. The issue of army bills was extended to meet the emergencies of the time, and special votes of thanks were passed to de Salabery and his officers in respect of Chateauguay, and to Morrison and his officers for the fight at Chrystler's. Then there ensued the inevitable wrangles between the elected Assembly and the Legislative Council, the equally inevitable attack upon the judges of the High Courts, and retrospect of the alleged grievances which had been suffered under Sir James Craig. A bill to preclude the judges from sitting in the Legislative Council was passed by the Assembly and rejected by the Council, and the same fate befell a bill for the appointment of a Canadian agent in Great Britain. Early in the session the Assembly betook themselves to a formal impeachment of Sewell and Monk, the Chief Justices of the province of Lower Canada and of the district of Montreal respectively, the main mover in the proceedings being Stuart, a former Attorney-General. Seventeen heads of impeachment, as the Assembly termed them, or articles of accusation, as Prevost to their disgust more truly described the vindictive statements, were drawn up against Sewell, and eight against Monk. The rules of practice, which the judges had laid down for the Law Courts in the year 1809, were represented as entrenching upon the powers of the Legislature

and subverting the civil liberties of the people; and in article after article of accusation or impeachment the so-called traitorous and wicked conduct of Chief Justice Sewell was arraigned with wearisome iteration. He was charged with having counselled and abetted Sir James Craig in supposed designs against popular liberties, and in misrepresentation of the conduct of the Canadians; and he was denounced as having fomented discord between the two houses of the Legislature. Reference was made to the previous dismissal of Stuart from the post of Attorney-General, though Stuart was not mentioned by name, and to his place having been taken by Sewell's brother. Sewell was further charged with having attempted to increase American influence and American settlement in Lower Canada and, in conjunction with John Henry, with having laboured to dismember the United States with a view to procuring the incorporation of Lower Canada with part of the Republic. Stuart was named as agent to prosecute the impeachment in England, and a vote to cover his expenses was tacked on to a revenue bill, but was struck out in the Legislative Council, the bill being lost in consequence. Then the Governor-General was asked to send the heads of impeachment with an address to the Prince Regent, and meanwhile to suspend the judges. Prevost refused to suspend them, commenting upon the fact that the accusations came from one branch of the Legislature only, but promised to forward the charges; and in June Sewell sailed for England to answer his accusers, receiving before he left addresses of confidence from the Executive Council, from the Legislative Council, from seigniors, land-owners, and merchants of Quebec and the neighbourhood, who resented the attack on the man, interference with judicial independence, and the claim of the Assembly to dominate all public life in Lower Canada. Meanwhile the Provincial Parliament was dissolved, and a new Assembly was elected, but the Legislature did not meet again until January, 1815. That the Legislature could have devoted their time and their attention to these unworthy squabbles

may be taken as evidence that the cloud of war did not hang heavily over Quebec.

Meeting of the Legislature of Upper Canada.

More harmonious were the proceedings in the Legislature of Upper Canada which met at York on February 15, and was prorogued on March 14. Acts were passed to suspend for the time the Habeas Corpus Act, to amend the Militia Act, to improve the roads of the province, and to deal more effectually with traitors and their property. It will be remembered that the Parliament buildings had been burnt down, and Drummond asked the Imperial government for authority to spend £10,000 upon new buildings, including a residence for the Lieutenant-Governor. In the meantime he made Kingston his principal place of residence. The printing-press, too, had been destroyed, and this loss was temporarily made good by buying an old press from the American town of Ogdensburg. Drummond reported well of the loyalty of the great majority of the residents in Upper Canada. Those who were disaffected were, he stated, mainly settlers who had come in from the United States. Two members of the Legislature had become open traitors, and their seats were declared vacant by the Assembly.

General Wilkinson, as has been told, in February, 1814, broke up his cantonments on the Salmon river and retreated to Plattsburg on Lake Champlain. In the middle of March he began a forward movement due north up the lake, along the route that Dearborn in 1812, and Hampton in 1813, had each tried in half-hearted fashion, in either case retracing their steps. Marching up the west side of the lake to the village of Chazy, at that point he threw a body of men across the lake, who penetrated a few miles over the line into Canada, and then recrossed and rejoined the main force which had now reached Champlain village just south of the boundary line. From Champlain, on March 30, Wilkinson, with about 4,000 men, advanced into Canada. At a distance of eight miles from Champlain, with the village of Odelltown intervening, is the Lacolle river, a tributary of the Richelieu. About three-quarters

Wilkinson advances on Canada from Lake Champlain.

of a mile from its junction with the Richelieu, and on its southern bank, stood a mill, distant three miles from Odelltown on the south, and seven miles from the Isle aux Noix lower down the Richelieu on the north, while two miles up the Lacolle river to the west was a little village named Burtonville, through which the main northern road ran. The mill was a strong stone structure and had been converted into a fort. It was connected with the northern bank of the Lacolle river by a wooden bridge, and on the northern bank was a dwelling-house, which had also been temporarily converted into a blockhouse, and behind which there was a barn. The buildings on both sides of the river stood in a small clearing surrounded by thick woods. The mill was held by rather under 200 men, commanded by Major Handcock of the 13th regiment. The garrison included a company of his own regiment, a party of the marine corps, and another party of frontier light infantry. Two companies of Canadian troops were at Burtonville, and at the Isle aux Noix there was a stronger force of regulars and marines.

The attack on Lacolle mill.

Starting on the morning of the 30th from Champlain, Wilkinson's force by mistake took the road to Burtonville. After encountering a picket near that place they turned back for a short distance, and at or near Odelltown struck the road which led to the mill. That road had been broken up and obstructed ; there was a skirmish with an advance picket ; and the result was that the force did not come within reach of the mill until between one and two in the day, after Handcock had had ample notice of their advance, and been given time to prepare for defence and to send for reinforcements. Wilkinson, on arriving before the mill, threw a detachment of some 600 men across the river in order to cut off the retreat of the garrison ; and then, after a heavy gun which was being brought up had broken down, he opened fire upon the mill at about 300 yards' distance with three lighter pieces of artillery. Shortly after the action had begun, two companies of the 13th came up from the Isle aux Noix and reached the block-

house on the north bank of the river. Handcock ordered them to cross the river and charge the guns, which they did, but were driven back by superior numbers. Soon afterwards the Canadians from Burtonville joined these two companies, and a second charge was ordered. It was nearly successful, the Americans being for the time driven from the guns, but the fire was too heavy for the English, and again they were compelled to fall back. The defenders of the mill and the blockhouse then barely held their posts, with the ammunition nearly run out, but were supported to some extent by gunboats which had come up the Richelieu and opened fire on the Americans from the mouth of the Lacolle river. Eventually, as evening drew on, the Americans, tired out with the marching and fighting, fell back, and retreated during the night to Odelltown, from which place the retreat was continued to Champlain, and ultimately to Plattsburg. The British casualties had been upwards of sixty; the American casualties, according to British accounts, were more than double that number. For the third time invasion up the line of Lake Champlain had failed, and Wilkinson was now added to the comparatively long list of American commanders who were superseded in the course of the war. He was tried before a court-martial, but acquitted.

The Americans retreat.

To both sides alike, command of the inland waters was essential for success in the war, as the previous campaign had abundantly proved; and on either side shipbuilding for the purpose was actively carried on. For service on Lake Champlain, the Americans during the winter built ships at Vergennes in the state of Vermont, eight miles up a stream called Otter Creek, which runs into the lake south of Burlington. After Wilkinson's repulse at Lacolle Mill the Americans established a battery at the mouth of Otter Creek, to protect the little naval dépôt higher up the river; and in May, when the navigation of the lake was free from ice, the British flotilla from the Isle aux Noix came up the Richelieu and into the lake to make an attempt on Otter Creek. It came to nothing. Shots were exchanged with the

Abortive British movement on Lake Champlain.

battery, the inhabitants of Burlington were alarmed by the passing ships, but Pring, who commanded them, had no land forces in convoy, and was not strong enough to make any impression on the enemy. In the light of subsequent events, Prevost was justly or unjustly blamed for not making a more serious attempt to destroy the American forts and ships, and for leaving the American commander, Macdonough, to strengthen his squadron with the new vessels which had been built during the winter.

In Upper Canada Drummond was more on the alert. Before January ended, he had submitted to Prevost a plan for destroying the American ascendancy on Lake Erie by an expedition against Detroit, with a view to taking that place and the fleet which was waiting there. The enterprise, we read, was given up owing to the mildness of the season, which favoured the side possessing the means of transport by water, of which the English were destitute on Lake Erie; and in consequence the shores of Upper Canada on that lake were left open to raiding expeditions from Presque Isle. One of these, under a Colonel Campbell, obtained an unenviable notoriety. Crossing the lake, Campbell with 500 men landed near Long Point on May 14, and on the following day plundered and then burnt to the ground the village of Port Dover and the mills, stores, and dwelling-houses in the neighbourhood. The conduct of Campbell and his men, wrote Drummond to Prevost, 'has been disgraced during their short stay ashore by every act of barbarity and of illiberal and unjustifiable outrage.' Representations having been made by the British authorities, Campbell was tried by court-martial; the destruction of the stores and mills was held to be justified, but the American officers who formed the court found that Campbell had erred in burning the dwelling-houses, which was not to be excused by the fact alleged on Campbell's behalf, that some of the inhabitants of Port Dover had been present at the burning of Buffalo. It was a somewhat inadequate trial, but in this frontier war raiding and excesses were only too common, and either side found

American raid on Port Dover.

some colourable excuse when charged with causing wanton damage. Along the line of the Thames, also, American raiders had been active. They had suffered a reverse at Chatham in December 1813, when a party of disembodied Canadian militia attacked a slightly superior number of Americans, and took nearly the whole of them prisoners. On the other hand, in the following March a more serious encounter between larger numbers, when a mixed body of regulars and militia under an officer of the 89th regiment, Captain Basden, attacked an entrenched position between London and Moraviantown, ended in the repulse of the British with the loss of sixty-five men. Drummond had a very difficult task in trying to protect the large tract of country which had been laid bare to invasion by the loss of Detroit and the annihilation of Barclay's ships and Procter's army, and he had in mind the likelihood of the British line on the Niagara frontier being turned by a cross-country movement directed against Burlington Heights.

Fighting on the line of the Thames.

But principally it was necessary to keep open communication on Lake Ontario, for provisions were running short in Upper Canada : and, to secure this end, like Brock before him, Drummond urged on Prevost the necessity of making a strong effort to destroy the American naval dépôt at Sackett's Harbour. He made his proposal towards the end of April, while Yeo, who had completed the building of two new ships, was superior in strength to Chauncey, and he stated that he would require a force of 4,000 men, which would entail a reinforcement of 1,000 regulars from Lower Canada. This number Prevost could not spare, and Drummond then turned his attention to the reduction of Oswego. Oswego, which had played a great part in the wars between the French and the English, and even in the War of Independence, as being the outlet on Lake Ontario of the water route from the Hudson viâ the Mohawk river, was not so important in this later war, inasmuch as in the intervening years roads had been opened up from and to other points in the state of New York. Still it was, next to Sackett's Harbour, and

Yeo and Drummond take Oswego.

after the taking of Fort Niagara, the principal American post on Lake Ontario. When Montcalm took Oswego in 1756, there had been forts on either side of the Oswego river, where it runs into the lake. The older fort or block-house, with the trading station, stood on the western bank, and a later fort had been built on the eastern side of the river. In 1814 the fort stood on the high ground on the eastern bank, about fifty feet above the level of the lake, and the village was on the other side of the river. Yeo reported that it was the most formidable position he had seen, as he phrased it, in Upper Canada. Yeo and Drummond, who saw eye to eye and heartily co-operated with each other, on May 3 embarked over a thousand troops at Kingston, Yeo's two new vessels adding strength to the fleet. The expedition included six companies of the Watteville regiment, the light company of the Glengarries, a battalion of marines, and some artillery. They started on the 4th, but, the winds being variable, did not arrive off Oswego until noon on the 5th. A reconnaissance in force was made by a body of men in boats, who went in close to the shore and drew the enemy's fire, the American accounts being to the effect that an actual attack was made but beaten off. The real attack was intended to be made on that same evening, but a gale sprang up, and after the men had been taken back on board ship, some of the boats fell adrift and were lost. It was not until the morning of the following day, the 6th, that a landing was effected. Nearly 800 men were landed, mainly marines and seamen, with the Glengarries and some of the Watteville regiment, the landing being covered by the ships, which were exposed to heavy fire from the American batteries. It was a difficult and dangerous enterprise, owing to the commanding position held by the defenders of the fort on high ground with adjoining woods ; and, in consequence, the British casualties were severe, amounting to about one hundred. Among the wounded was Captain Mulcaster, the good sailor who had followed Wilkinson's flotilla down to Chrystler's Farm, and who now led the 200

seamen who joined in the assault. The Glengarries cleared the woods, the main body charged up the hill and rushed the fort, and in ten minutes from the time when the crest of the hill was gained the fort was taken. The Americans, who numbered about 500, hardly suffered as much as the British, and retreated up the Oswego river, some of the stores having already been moved up that river to the rapids known as the Oswego or Onondaga falls, thirteen miles distant from Oswego. The rest of the stores and several large guns fell into British hands ; and having put on board ship whatever could be carried off, having dismantled the fort and burnt the barracks, early on the morning of the 7th Drummond and Yeo set sail for Kingston.

Before May ended, this success was followed by a somewhat serious reverse. Guns and naval stores were collected at Oswego falls, much needed for Chauncey's fleet at Sackett's Harbour, and the Americans watched their opportunity to bring them down the river and along the lake without being intercepted by Yeo's blockading squadron. On May 28 nineteen boats were brought down to Oswego loaded with guns and stores, and an escort was placed on board of 150 riflemen. The boats started that night and, moving east along the lake, all but one reached the mouth of the Big Salmon river at sunrise on the 29th. There an Indian escort accompanied them on the shore, and at noon on the 29th they reached Sandy Creek, about sixteen miles from Sackett's Harbour. The boats were taken about two miles up the creek, but they had been seen by the English, and on the morning of the 30th two gunboats, with smaller boats, followed them up. The smaller boats carried about 200 sailors and marines, who were landed in two parties, one on either side of the creek. The American riflemen and Indians had been placed in ambush about half a mile below where their own boats were, and higher up was a reinforcement which had been sent from Sackett's Harbour. Advancing up the wooded banks in somewhat foolhardy fashion, the English

British reverse at Sandy Creek.

fell into the ambush, and in a few minutes the parties on either shore, together with the boats which accompanied them, were overwhelmed, all the men being killed, wounded or taken prisoners.

For the third and for the last time the banks of the Niagara river now became the principal scene of the war in Canada, and harder fighting was to take place there than had as yet been witnessed in the war. It is true that, as the months went on, the outlook was brightening for the British side. In April the great war on the continent of Europe was at length ended for the time. Napoleon was exiled to Elba, and Louis XVIII was restored to the throne of France. In March Wellington had sent Marshal Beresford to take possession of Bordeaux, and from that port, when the end of the war came, a large number of the Peninsular veterans were shipped for America. Sixteen thousand men reached Canada in July and August, but not in time to take part in the battles of Chippawa and Lundy's Lane ; and in the earlier months of the year only one regiment reinforced the army in Canada. This was the second battalion of the 8th or King's regiment, which had been stationed in New Brunswick, and which, like the 104th regiment in the previous year, made a winter march in February from Fredericton to Quebec. In its place, a newly levied local regiment, known as the New Brunswick Fencibles, garrisoned that province. A party of 200 picked seamen for service on the lakes came up about the same time and by the same route, and then there was a lull in reinforcements until June, when Prevost reported the arrival of more officers and seamen, of artillery, of the 16th regiment from Ireland, of which regiment he had in February been made colonel, and, towards the end of the month, of the 90th regiment from the West Indies. Before June ended, the first detachment of Peninsular troops, consisting of the 6th and 82nd regiments, were in the St. Lawrence. At the beginning of that same month another corps from Wellington's army sailed from the Gironde for Bermuda, to co-operate with the fleet which was blockading the

Events in Europe. Close of the Peninsular War.

Reinforcements sent to Canada.

Atlantic coast of the United States. On the other hand, the result of two campaigns had been to harden the Americans into trained soldiers, while the more incapable leaders had gradually been eliminated. The growing strength of the British army in Canada was therefore neutralized by the better quality of the men opposed to them, and the British forces were less successful in the last months of this war than in its earlier stages, when the numerical odds were overwhelmingly against Canada and its defenders.

The war on the Niagara frontier. The Americans commanded by Jacob Brown.

Wilkinson had been succeeded in the command of the American army on the Canadian frontier by Major-General Jacob Brown. Brown had been in charge of Sackett's Harbour when Prevost made his abortive attack upon that place at the end of May, 1813, and he had commanded the vanguard of Wilkinson's expedition down the St. Lawrence, carrying out his part of the operations without any mishap. When in February, 1814, Wilkinson's cantonments on the Salmon river were broken up, Brown, with part of the force, was sent to Sackett's Harbour, and after the affair of Lacolle Mill and Wilkinson's consequent supersession he was chosen to command the army. At Sackett's Harbour Brown received somewhat ambiguous orders from Armstrong, the Secretary of War, leaving him uncertain as to whether Kingston or the Niagara frontier was to be the first object of the coming campaign. He marched towards Niagara round the lake, then retraced his steps, and when it was clear that at Niagara the real effort was to be made, marched off again. He himself was at Sackett's Harbour early in May, but his force was being gathered on the Niagara river, with their head quarters at Buffalo, and there they were carefully drilled and trained through the early summer with a view to the coming campaign. Meanwhile Chauncey completed his preparations at Sackett's Harbour, and added a new ship to his squadron, with the result that at the beginning of June his adversary Yeo felt himself no longer strong enough to continue to act on the offensive, and the Americans to some extent regained the ascendancy on Lake Ontario.

Drummond had long foreseen that in the coming campaign the main strain of war would be on the Niagara frontier, but Prevost did not share this opinion. Moreover, as at the beginning of the war, the latter attempted to patch up an armistice, which he hoped might last until the negotiations proceeding in Europe bore the fruits of peace. In May he sent his Adjutant-General, Baynes, who had acted as negotiator in the early days of the war, to Champlain to treat with an agent of the United States, but the proceedings came to nothing, and were reprobated alike by Drummond and Yeo and by the Home government. Drummond meanwhile busied himself with making the best dispositions that could be made with inadequate resources, for the defence of the line of the Niagara.

Prevost attempts to make an armistice.

Want of provisions troubled him, for the peninsula of Ontario had long been harried by war. Owing to the difficulty of procuring supplies, de Rottenburg, while administering the government of Upper Canada, had proclaimed martial law for this particular purpose. His action in doing so had been censured by the Assembly as unconstitutional, and Drummond at first revoked the proclamation; but in April, 1814, he wrote home that, unpopular as the measure was, he had been forced to recur to it. Want of men, too, sorely troubled him, not only to check the depredations of American raiding parties, but also to prevent the line of defences on the Niagara river from being turned, the communications cut, and Burlington Heights assailed by a force marching either from Detroit or from some point on Lake Erie. It was no longer merely a question of holding the bank of the Niagara river against a frontal attack, and if necessary falling back on Burlington in comparative security. The right flank was exposed to an enemy who held Detroit and could advance by the line of Procter's retreat, and who entirely commanded Lake Erie, and could land on any point upon the Canadian shore. With Chauncey superior in strength to Yeo on Lake Ontario, a combined attack could be made from both lakes, with the prospect of intercepting and crushing the

Drummond's difficulties.

small army which covered the peninsula between them. Nor were the posts on the Niagara river strong or strongly held. There had been time to strengthen them, but the men and the material were wanting. It is true that the English had the great advantage of possessing Fort Niagara on the American side of the river, and the position at Fort George had been rendered more defensible by constructing a battery lower down on Missassauga Point at the outlet of the river into Lake Ontario ; but the defences of Fort George itself were, it would seem, wholly inadequate, and so were those of Fort Erie, over against Buffalo where the American army was gathered. At Burlington again, all important to hold as a rallying point in case of retreat from Niagara, Colonel Hercules Scott of the 103rd regiment, who was in command of that post, at the beginning of June reported that the works were in a wretched state for purposes of defence. Drummond, who had Harvey by his side as Deputy Adjutant-General, resolved not to concentrate his forces, but to cover as much ground as possible. Late in June Fort Niagara was garrisoned by between 700 and 800 men. At Fort George and its outposts there were about 1,000 ; at Queenston rather under 300 ; at Chippawa and its outposts nearly 500 ; at Fort Erie about 150 ; at or near Long Point on Lake Erie under 300 ; and at Burlington between 400 and 500 ; while York was garrisoned by over 1,000 men. The whole was under the command of Major-General Riall in Drummond's absence at Kingston, Riall's head quarters being at Fort George.

At the end of June General Brown had under his command, available for the invasion of Canada, between 4,000 and 5,000 men. There was a corps of artillery, two brigades of regular infantry commanded by Brigadier-Generals Winfield Scott and Ripley, and a brigade of militia and volunteers from New York and Pennsylvania commanded by General Porter, with whom there was also a body of Indians belonging to those of the Six Nation Indians who kept their old homes in the state of New York. On July 2 Brown issued a general order for crossing the river and

entering Canada. Early on the morning of July 3 Scott's brigade was carried across the river about a mile below Fort Erie, and Ripley's men landed about the same distance above the fort. The fort was then invested, a battery being erected in a position to command its works; a few shots were exchanged, and at five o'clock in the afternoon the garrison surrendered, to the number of 137 according to General Brown's official return. Drummond wrote subsequently that he had hoped the fort would in any case hold the enemy in check for some days, and it is not explained why the defenders made little or no resistance, or why, if the defences were untenable, the position was garrisoned at all. As it was, the Americans gained a great advantage by taking the post without loss on the first day of the campaign, and the English were to find to their cost at a later date how strong it could be made and how long it could be held. On the following morning Scott's brigade advanced north along the bank of the Niagara river as far as a stream called Street's Creek, about two miles short of Chippawa, having skirmished with and driven back part of the British force from Chippawa which had moved out to reconnoitre. Late in the evening of the same day the whole American army, excepting the volunteers and Indians under General Porter's immediate command who came up on the following morning, was encamped at Street's Creek. The bridge over the creek, which had been broken by the retreating British troops, had been repaired, and the Americans held both sides of the stream, the major part of the force remaining on the southern side, the side removed from Chippawa.

The Americans cross the Niagara river, and take Fort Erie.

They advance to Street's Creek.

When on the morning of the 3rd, Riall heard that the Americans had crossed into Canada, he ordered up five companies of the Royal Scots from Queenston and Fort George to reinforce the troops who were holding the Chippawa position. He then waited for a further reinforcement of between 400 and 500 men of the 8th or King's regiment, who were on their way from York to the Niagara frontier. When they had arrived, on the morning of July 5,

Battle of Chippawa.

he determined to attack the Americans at Street's Creek without further delay. It was a somewhat rash proceeding. He had with him 1,500 regulars, consisting of three regiments of the line: the 1st, or Royal Scots, the 8th, and the 100th; a squadron of dragoons; and a detachment of artillery. There were also present some 300 militia and much the same number of Indians. Riall, in his report on the battle, estimated the number of the Americans from information received from prisoners at 6,000, with a strong force of artillery; but probably the actual number did not exceed between 4,000 and 5,000 men. The British position at Chippawa was on the left or northern bank of the Chippawa stream, which was therefore crossed by Riall's men when they advanced to the attack. The scene of the battle of Street's Creek, or Chippawa, both titles being used, was the plain between the two streams which bear those names. The battle-field was such as was common in this war, the fighting ground being flanked by the Niagara river on one side, by woods on the other. The American right rested on buildings and orchards standing on the river bank, in front of the main line there was a ravine, and the left touched the woods. It was a strong position, selected by Winfield Scott, whose brigade, with the bulk of the artillery, formed the main fighting line. Ripley's brigade was in reserve on the left of Scott's force, and on the left too, in the outskirts of the woods, Porter's militia and Indians were ordered to advance, and, according to Brown's account, having begun the engagement, to fall back and bring their adversaries under fire from the American regulars and artillery. Riall on his side had also, at four o'clock in the afternoon, ordered the militia and Indians to move forward on the right and skirt the woods. They became engaged with Porter's men, and the light companies of the Royal Scots being brought up in support, the American riflemen broke and fled in every direction. Brown then ordered Scott's brigade and the artillery to advance, and against them Riall hurled his infantry, supported by two or three light guns. The brunt of the fight-

ing fell upon the Royal Scots and the 100th regiment, who charged with great determination, but could make no serious impression upon superior numbers, backed by artillery which was well posted and used. 'The enemy deployed into line,' wrote Drummond, in sending Riall's report on the battle, 'and withstood our attacks with the greatest steadiness.' The American infantry, in fact, was of very different calibre from the men who fought at Queenston and in the early engagements of the war. Better trained, better handled and led, they were not to be routed by a smaller number of British troops of the line. Ripley's force followed up Scott's brigade, keeping the latter's left flank secure against any turning movement; and, many British soldiers having fallen, Riall drew off his men, and under cover of the 8th regiment, the third infantry battalion engaged on the British side, the whole force retreated into the lines at Chippawa. The battle cost the British army 500 men—heavier casualties than the Americans suffered, and far heavier than could be afforded. The men fought well, very few were taken prisoners, and the retreat was creditably conducted. Colonel Hercules Scott who at the time of the battle was at Burlington Heights, and who appears to have had a poor opinion of his superior officers, wrote to his brother a month later: 'This action was ill advised, and the movements ill executed.' Drummond's view, on the contrary, was that nothing but the superior numbers of the enemy could have prevented the attack from being a complete success. In Riall's defence it should be said that all the previous record of the war pointed to the advisability of taking the offensive on the British side against numerical odds; in fact, a new feature had been introduced in the better quality of the American soldiers.

Defeat of the British force under Riall.

On the day after the battle Brown wrote to the Secretary of War that, after arranging for the transport of the wounded to Buffalo, he would continue his advance, and was confident of breaking down all opposition between his army and Lake Ontario, where he hoped to meet Chaun-

Riall retreats to Fort George.

cey's fleet. In two days' time he turned Riall's position at Chippawa by crossing the Chippawa river above the village. Riall accordingly fell back on Fort George, abandoning both Chippawa and Queenston, and on July 9 the Americans were reported to be at the village of St. David's. On the 14th Riall had retreated to Twenty Mile Creek and joined hands with the Burlington force, British garrisons being maintained at Fort George and Missassauga, and at Fort Niagara on the other side of the river. These forts were placed in charge of Lieutenant-Colonel Tucker, of the 41st regiment, who was instructed to hold them to the last extremity ; but, as in the case of Fort Erie, their defences did not warrant hope of prolonged resistance, and moreover Riall reported gross neglect on the part of the Commissary of Ordnance, who had not laid in a sufficient supply of ammunition. There now followed an interval of a fortnight, during which the two forces watched each other's movements, while skirmishers and outposts raided and fought with varying success. Brown's object was to overpower the British forts and reach Lake Ontario, in order to join hands with Chauncey : but Chauncey, in the meantime, remained inactive at Sackett's Harbour, partly through his own sickness, partly because he had another new ship on the stocks, and also, it was evident, through jealousy of Brown. Writing later to Brown in defence of his conduct, he repudiated in high-flown terms the idea that his fleet was to be a convenience for carrying provisions and stores to the army—' an agreeable appendage to attend its marches and counter-marches '. ' The Secretary of the Navy,' he continued, ' has honoured us with a higher destiny ; we are intended to seek and to fight the enemy's fleet. This is the great purpose of the government in creating this fleet, and I shall not be diverted in my efforts to effectuate it by any sinister attempt to render us subordinate to, or an appendage of, the army.' The net result was that he did not leave Sackett's Harbour and make his way up the lake till August 1, by which time Brown had fallen back, the battle of Lundy's Lane had been fought, and the oppor-

Chauncey fails to co-operate with Brown.

tunity for co-operation between fleet and army had passed away. Riall on his side was jealously guarding the communications with Burlington and at the same time holding his force in readiness to attack the flank of Brown's army, if the latter were to press the British garrisons too hardly; while General Drummond was still at Kingston, hurrying up reinforcements, calling out the militia, and attending to the case of Canadian traitors who had been taken in the affair at Chatham in the previous December, and were tried at Ancaster near Burlington for high treason, with the result that eight of them were hanged.

Canadian traitors hung.

It was necessary to make an example. Willcocks and his band of renegade Canadian settlers were with Brown's army, conspicuous in making the loyal settlers pay penalty for holding to their allegiance by harrying their farms and homes. A similar case to the destruction of Newark occurred about this time. On the night of July 12 a British patrol under Major Evans of the 8th had a skirmish with an American party, resulting in the death of an American militia officer, Brigadier-General Swift. The brigade order issued by General Porter, who commanded the American militia, stated that Swift 'was assassinated by one of the prisoners, who, after begging for and receiving quarter, shot him through the breast'. There does not seem to have been evidence to support this statement, Swift's death having probably been an ordinary incident in a confused struggle between outposts at night time; but the occurrence was supposed to have exasperated the Americans, and contributed to the burning of the village of St. David's, which took place on July 19. There had been a considerable amount of skirmishing in the neighbourhood on the previous day, and on the 19th a detachment of American militia under a Colonel Stone burnt to the ground this 'Tory village', as they styled it, consisting of thirty or forty houses, one of the principal sufferers from the outrage being Major David Secord, whose name it bore, and who was a man of note in the ranks of the Canadian Loyalists. Stone's action, however, was promptly dis-

The burning of St. David's.

avowed by Brown, and on the same day on which he burnt the village he was dismissed from the American army.

The Americans reconnoitre the British forts.

On July 15 General Porter and his brigade were sent by Brown to reconnoitre Forts George and Missassauga. They passed right round the forts and reached Lake Ontario. As they returned, Tucker moved out and skirmished with their rear-guard, which was supported by Ripley's brigade. On the 20th Brown advanced slowly from Queenston against Fort George, General Scott leading the van. A position was taken up which threatened the fort, and part of the American force was thrown across the river, as though to open fire upon it from the opposite bank. Queenston Heights were left unoccupied, and Riall, who on the 19th had moved up to St. Catharine's or Twelve Mile Creek, sent some of the militia to occupy Queenston in the rear of the American army. Brown apparently wished to bring on a general engagement, but failing to do so, on the 22nd retreated again to Queenston, driving out the few British and Canadian troops who were there. On the following day, having received dispatches from Sackett's Harbour, and learned that there was no hope of co-operation from Chauncey, he determined on a further retreat, and on the night of the 24th, or the morning of the 25th, was again encamped on the Chippawa. Disappointed in his first plan of campaign through the absence of the fleet, he formed a new scheme, and resolved, after drawing provisions from Fort Schlosser on the American side of the Niagara river, and disencumbering his force of their heavy baggage, to march diagonally across the country and attempt to surprise the all-important British position at Burlington.

Brown falls back to Chippawa with a view to marching on Burlington.

Riall's forces and position.

On July 22 Riall reported from Twelve Mile Creek that he had with him about 1,700 men, including the incorporated militia. The rest of the militia which was being collected amounted to between 700 and 800 men, and the Indians numbered also about 800. He was uneasy as to the Indians: a large proportion of them belonged to the Six Nations, and Norton, the half-breed or Indianized

Scotchman [1], who had constituted himself their leader, had allowed them to receive emissaries from their brethren who were fighting on the American side. The right of Riall's force extended to the Ten Mile Creek, and he covered the roads which led from the Niagara river in the direction of Burlington, holding the country in the neighbourhood of Beaver dam and the present line of the Welland canal. Fitz Gibbon, the hero of the Beaver dam incident, now serving with the Glengarry regiment, was with Riall's force, active as ever in scouting, and knowing by this time nearly every yard of the district in which the armies were operating. Assured of Brown's retreat, Riall sent forward about half of his force on the night of the 24th, and early in the morning of the 25th they took up a position close to the junction of the cross-road known as Lundy's Lane with the main road which ran parallel to the river from Chippawa to Queenston, the point of junction being immediately below the falls of Niagara. Lieutenant-Colonel Pearson commanded this advance force, which included the Glengarry regiment, some men of the 104th, a strong body of militia, a troop of dragoons, and a detachment of artillery, rather under 1,000 men in all. Their encampment at Lundy's Lane was within three miles of the American position at Chippawa.

His vanguard advances to Lundy's Lane.

General Drummond, as has been stated, had been detained at Kingston. On the evening of July 22 he reached York, to which place he had brought up the 89th regiment,[2] consisting of 400 effective men under Colonel Morrison, who had commanded at the battle of Chrystler's, and the

[1] As to Norton, see above, p. 49 note. In *Notes on Upper Canada*, published at Washington in January, 1813, and reprinted by Colonel Cruikshank for the Lundy's Lane Historical Society in the *Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier in* 1813, pt. 1, p. 25. Norton is spoken of as 'a native white man of the Lower Province, who is a tolerable English scholar and well versed in the English language. After being patronized by the famous Brandt, he was adopted and made a chief.' Norton's services, and those of the Indians under him, were acknowledged in a dispatch from Lord Bathurst, dated the 5th of March, 1814, and again in a dispatch dated 10 May, 1816.

[2] Now the 2nd battalion of the Royal Irish Fusiliers.

flank companies of the 104th regiment under Colonel Drummond. The Watteville regiment was also on its way to the front, but had not yet come up. American accounts of the battle of Lundy's Lane speak of the British army present at that fight as having been reinforced by some of Wellington's troops, but this was not the case, although the arrival of some of the Peninsular veterans in the St. Lawrence enabled other troops which had been serving in Lower Canada to be sent up country. On July 23 Drummond wrote from York to Riall, and also to Tucker, who was in charge of the forts, stating that the 89th and the flank companies of the 104th would be sent at once across the lake to Fort Niagara, so as to enable Tucker to take action on the American side of the river, and clear the guns which the Americans were placing in position at Youngstown just above Fort Niagara, in order to command Fort George on the opposite side of the river. Tucker was to reinforce his troops at Fort Niagara by drawing men from Forts George and Missassauga on the opposite side, being mainly men of the 41st regiment. Including the 89th and the 104th and two-thirds of the men in garrison, all that could be spared without leaving the forts absolutely denuded, Drummond calculated that Tucker could make a sortie with 1,500 men, who would be further supported by gunboats on the river. Meanwhile Riall on the Canadian side was to make a diversion by advancing against Brown's army, but not to risk a general engagement unless the Americans brought it on, in which case Tucker in his turn was to move to Riall's support. This combined operation was to take place at daylight on Monday, July 25.

Drummond's plan of operations on the Niagara river.

On Sunday evening, the 24th, Drummond himself embarked at York for Fort Niagara, and reached the fort at daybreak on the 25th. There he learnt from Tucker that Riall, as far as could be ascertained and as was actually the case, had already begun a forward movement against Brown's army. He accordingly ordered Morrison and the 89th, with detachments of the 1st Royal Scots and of the 8th drawn from the garrisons of Fort George and Missas-

sauga, to advance along the Canadian bank of the river through Queenston towards the falls, in order to support Riall, while Tucker was instructed to carry out the original movement on the other side of the river but with smaller numbers than had been contemplated, 300 men of the 41st, 200 of the Royal Scots, with some seamen and a body of Indians constituting his force. There was some delay in carrying out this latter part of Drummond's scheme, with the result that the Americans at Youngstown and Lewiston had time to retreat up the river, taking with them their guns, but leaving at Lewiston tents, stores and provisions, which fell into British hands. At Lewiston, Tucker's troops were ferried across to Queenston and joined Morrison's corps, which had halted at that point, seven miles from Fort George and about the same distance from Lundy's Lane. The men were fed and rested; most of the 41st and the 100th regiments were sent back to hold the forts; and, with the 89th, detachments of the 1st and 8th, and the light company of the 41st, numbering rather over 800 in all, Drummond, about four o'clock in the afternoon, pressed forward towards the falls. On the march he learnt from Riall that Brown's army was advancing in force; and, riding up to the head of his column, as it neared the point where Lundy's Lane joined the Queenston road, he found Pearson's troops, who, as already told, formed the van of Riall's army, and had in the early morning occupied the position at the cross-roads, beginning to retreat in obedience to Riall's orders, and the Americans within 600 yards of the position and on the point of occupying it. Drummond immediately countermanded the retreat, and drew up his own force and Pearson's in battle order. The day was now far spent, and it was nearly six o'clock in the evening.

Drummond countermands the retreat from Lundy's Lane, and determines to hold the position.

It seems that Brown, at noon on the same day, had been apprised of Tucker's advance along the American bank of the river. Fearing that the British troops would move beyond Lewiston and capture Fort Schlosser just above the falls, which was the main dépôt of the stores and

Movements of Brown and Riall respectively.

baggage of the American army, he in his turn determined to effect a diversion by moving forward from Chippawa, on the Canadian side, retracing the line of his retreat. He sent forward Winfield Scott's brigade. Scott, on nearing the falls, found the enemy in his front, sent back word to Brown to that effect, and prepared for action. Riall, learning of Scott's advance, ordered Pearson to fall back towards Queenston, and sent instructions to Hercules Scott, who was bringing up the remainder of Riall's army from Twelve Mile Creek, also to march upon Queenston instead of Lundy's Lane. Such was the position of affairs when Drummond arrived. Riall had apparently imagined that he was being attacked by the whole American army. Winfield Scott, who had at first imagined that he had the whole British army in front of him, subsequently finding that this was not the case, began the attack before the other brigades of Brown's army came up; and meanwhile Drummond, of whose arrival Winfield Scott can hardly have been aware, had made what hasty preparations could be made to hold the ground, and had sent back word to Hercules Scott once more to face about and come up to Lundy's Lane.

The battle of Lundy's Lane.

Drummond had with him, in Morrison's and Pearson's troops combined, according to his own account, not more than 1,600 men, and certainly not more than 1,800. The key of the position was rising ground on the inland side of the Queenston road. Over the rising ground passed the cross-road of Lundy's Lane. On the summit of the hill, on the southern side of the cross-road, the side on which the Americans were attacking, slightly in advance of the main line of infantry, Drummond placed his artillery. The right, skirted by woods on the high ground and its slope, was held by the Glengarry regiment and a few men of the 104th. They were thrown forward in advance, forming an angle with the main line of battle, in order to secure the right flank against any turning movement. Just behind the hill, in the rear of and on the left of the artillery, the 89th and detachments of the Royal Scots

and 41st were drawn up to support the guns. Their left rested on the Queenston road, and between the road and the river were stationed a battalion of incorporated militia and a detachment of the 8th. On the road, in rear of the infantry, was a squadron of the 19th Light Dragoons. The Americans' object was to gain the hill, and for that purpose their efforts were mainly directed against the British left and the left centre. It was a little after six o'clock in the evening when Winfield Scott ordered his men to attack. His numbers were smaller than those of Drummond's army, amounting apparently to from 1,200 to 1,400 men. The main advance was along the line of the Queenston road, but one regiment wedged itself in between the extreme British left and the river, threatening to turn the line at that point. For an hour the Americans made little or no progress; the rest of Brown's army then came up and reinforced Scott's brigade, part of that brigade being replaced in the front line by fresh troops under General Ripley. Some 4,000 men were now engaged against Drummond's smaller force. The regiment nearest the river, on the extreme American right and the extreme British left, succeeded in turning the British left; the Canadian militia and the men of the 8th, who held this end of the line, were forced back, but reformed behind the British centre on the inside of the Queenston road, and again secured the flank and commanded the road. In the midst of the fighting at this point, General Riall, who had been wounded and was passing to the rear, was intercepted and taken prisoner.

The British left turned.

General Riall taken prisoner.

The British artillery still held the hill; the 89th with the detachments of the Royal Scots and 41st still maintained their position, behind and covering the guns. General Brown saw that the issue of the battle depended on gaining the high ground and overpowering the British guns, and he ordered one of his officers, Colonel Miller, to take his regiment and storm the battery. Miller, two years before, in the early days of the war, had commanded at the fight at Maguaga the force sent out by Hull from Detroit to

attempt to reopen his communications with the au Raisin river. He now proved himself a good fighting man. Though another regiment detailed to support him broke and gave way, he led his own men up the slope cleverly and well. 'It happened,' he tells us in his own account of the fight, 'there was an old rail fence on the side where we approached undiscovered by the enemy, with a small growth of shrubbery by the fence and within less than two rods of the cannon's mouth.' Moving up by the fence he rested his men under its cover, bade them give a volley, and then rush the guns. 'Not one man at the cannons was left to put fire to them.' There then ensued volleys and bayonet charges by the British infantry attempting to regain the guns, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to piece together what actually followed. Drummond reported in his dispatch that the guns remained but for a few minutes in the enemy's hands and were quickly recovered. The American accounts stated that all the attempts to recover them were repulsed, but that they were left behind when the American army fell back to its camp at the end of the battle. Colonel Miller's naïve account of what happened is as follows: 'I forgot to tell you we were unfortunate about our artillery at last. After Generals Brown, Scott and others were wounded, we were ordered to return back to our camp, about three miles, and preparations had not been made for taking off the cannon. It was impossible for me to defend it and make preparations for that too, and it was all left upon the ground except one beautiful six-pounder.' General Porter wrote four days after the fight: 'our victory was complete but . . . was converted into a defeat by a precipitate retreat, leaving the dead, the wounded, captured artillery, and our hard-earned honour to the enemy.' The testimony of the British officer, Colonel Hercules Scott, was: 'In the last they gained possession of five out of seven of our guns, but the fire kept upon them was so severe that it afterwards appeared they had not been able to carry them off, for we found them next morning on the spot they had been taken.' This is no doubt what actually

The Americans charge the hill and the British guns are put out of action.

happened. The Americans gained the guns, which were out of action for the rest of the battle, but the British infantry stolidly held their ground, and in the end the guns were recovered.

It was now nine o'clock at night, and darkness had come on. There was for a short time a lull in the firing, while the Americans were bringing up ammunition and preparing for another general attack. Drummond's much enduring troops, half of whom, it will be remembered, had marched some fourteen miles on that July day before ever the battle began, were hard pressed; but reinforcements came up, for Hercules Scott and his column of 1,200 men at length appeared upon the scene. Many of them were young soldiers, all of them were worried and tired out with marching and counter-marching through that summer day, yet they enabled Drummond to prolong the fight. They had been under arms since early daybreak; the start from Twelve Mile Creek had been delayed till noon; when within three miles of Lundy's Lane, shortly before the battle began, they received Riall's orders bidding them fall back to Queenston; when they had retreated towards Queenston for nearly four miles, Drummond's message reached them, and once more they turned right about and marched to the sound of the guns. They had covered twenty miles in marching back and fore, when at length they came stumbling up in the darkness to their comrades' aid. They included Hercules Scott's own regiment, the 103rd, detachments of the Royal Scots, of the 8th and of the 104th, and about 300 of the sedentary militia, with two six-pounder guns. Unable in the night rightly to distinguish friend from foe, the 103rd and the militia marched into the centre of the American army now on the crest of the hill, and fell back in confusion, but were rallied by their officers and placed in the second line, while others of Scott's column were posted on the extreme right, hitherto held by the Glengarries, in order to extend the British line in that direction, where Drummond feared a flank attack. For the better part of three hours the fight went on again with

British reinforcements come up.

no material advantage on either side, until, just before midnight, Brown, who like Winfield Scott had been disabled by wounds, ordered Ripley to draw off his men and fall back to the lines at Chippawa. Exhausted, and suffering especially from want of water, the Americans retreated, and reached their encampment, three miles distant, in the early hours of the 26th. The British troops, equally if not more worn out, rested on the ground where they stood, until in three or four hours' time the sun rose again, lighting up the dead, the wounded, the derelict cannon, and the unconquered hill. Brown reported in his dispatch that he ordered Ripley to return to camp, bringing off the dead, the wounded, and the artillery, which he considered an easy matter as 'the enemy', according to his account, 'had entirely ceased to act'; that after arrival in camp he further ordered him to refresh his troops, and taking every man 'to put himself on the field of battle as the day dawned, and there to meet and beat the enemy if he appeared'. He complained that his orders were not executed. The dispatch, written at Buffalo on August 7, was evidently intended for public consumption. The American troops can hardly have reached their lines before one o'clock in the morning, and it cannot have been seriously contemplated that they were to march out again to fight at four o'clock. As a matter of fact Ripley made a reconnaissance on the 26th, but retired again, broke the bridge over the Chippawa river to cover his retreat, destroyed a great part of his stores, and fell back towards Fort Erie, followed up but not seriously molested by some of Drummond's light troops, cavalry and Indians. He reached Fort Erie on the 27th. A court of inquiry was subsequently held into his conduct, and he was honourably acquitted.

The Americans retire and the British hold the battle-field.

The Americans retreat to Fort Erie.

The battle of Lundy's Lane or Niagara, or, as the American accounts of the time christened it, the battle of Bridgewater, was the hardest fought in Canada during the war of 1812. Of the 3,000 men who were in action on the British side, 878 were returned as killed, wounded, missing,

or prisoners. The number of the killed was not very large, 84 in all; the number of the wounded was large, amounting to 559, but many of the wounds were slight owing to the use of buck-shot by the Americans. General Drummond was severely wounded, but kept the field. Riall was wounded and taken prisoner: Morrison, commanding the 89th, was badly wounded; so was Robinson, commanding the incorporated militia. The 89th had 250 casualties among 400 men engaged; the Royal Scots, who had lost nearly 230 men at the battle of Chippawa, suffered a further loss of 170 at Lundy's Lane. Other regiments of the line suffered heavy losses, and so did the incorporated militia. On the British side one gun was lost and two American guns were gained. The American casualties, according to their official returns, numbered 854, but this is supposed to have been too small an estimate, and it seems unlikely that the attacking force should have suffered less severely than the defenders of the position. Drummond estimated the enemy's losses at not less than 1,500, including several hundreds of prisoners, but this statement was no doubt beyond the mark, and it may be taken that the losses on the two sides were fairly equal. Among the severely wounded on the American side were, as already stated, the first and second in command, Generals Brown and Winfield Scott.

Review of the battle of Lundy's Lane.

The British had the advantage in position. The Americans, except at the beginning of the fight, had the advantage in numbers, and their troops had not, like the majority of the British army, been marching through the day. Both sides claimed the victory and both sides earned it, for the Americans pressed their attacks with the courage and discipline of veteran soldiers, in strong contrast to the unsteady, spasmodic efforts made earlier in the war. They were bravely led and, as far as can be judged, were handled on the field in a manner which showed that their commanders knew their business. 'No boast of a great victory,' wrote Hercules Scott to his brother, 'but in my opinion it was nearly equal on both sides'. 'General Drummond,' he

continued, 'commanded in the action, but I am sorry to say I could not then or now observe the smallest appearance of generalship.' Scott's views were probably coloured by the fact that he had been the victim of contradictory orders throughout the day. At any rate his judgment of Drummond cannot be accepted as fair or sound. Drummond showed that he had the faculty of prompt and bold decision when he counter-ordered Riall's retreat, re-occupied the position at Lundy's Lane, and gave battle to the Americans. He disposed his troops well, and well he upheld the fight. The issue justified his action, for, inasmuch as the British army kept the field, the Americans retreated, and for the time being their scheme of invasion was shattered, it is impossible to class Lundy's Lane as other than a British victory.

Lundy's Lane was a British victory.

In a hand-to-hand fight of this kind much depends on the subordinate commanders, and Drummond was fortunate in this respect. Harvey, to whose 'able and energetic exertions during this severe contest' he bore full testimony, Morrison, and others no doubt contributed largely to the stand which was made, and which with less efficient officers would probably not have been made. But after all it was a soldiers' battle, and, like many other stricken fields, Lundy's Lane proved the priceless stubbornness and endurance of the British infantry. The troops, we read, 'repeatedly, when hard pressed, formed round the colours of the 89th regiment, and invariably repulsed the attacks made against them,' the Canadian militia standing shoulder to shoulder with the soldiers of the line, fighting on their own soil, to the sound of the waters on their Horseshoe fall.

The Canadians bore themselves in the fight manfully and well. Drummond wrote warmly of their zeal and loyalty and their 'conspicuous gallantry'. Immediately after the battle he disbanded the whole of the sedentary militia, and sent them to their farms to look after their crops, for starvation in Upper Canada was imminent. 'The whole produce of the neighbouring country,' he

wrote three days before the battle, 'is in the greatest danger of being lost'. Keeping the incorporated militia, and replenishing his small army from the garrisons of the forts, he moved his head quarters on August 1 from Niagara to a point half-way between Chippawa and Fort Erie, bent on dislodging the Americans from Fort Erie and driving them across the river. The task was to prove a harder one than had been contemplated. On August 2 he advanced to the high ground opposite Black Rock, about two miles short of Fort Erie; and on that night he sent 600 men under Colonel Tucker across the river to the American shore with orders to march under cover of the darkness on Buffalo and, after taking that place and destroying the stores in it, to turn back and attack the American guns which were in position at Black Rock. The enterprise miscarried. The troops, whose movements had been suspected by the American officer in command at Black Rock, landed below that place on the lower side of a stream called the Schojeaquady, or in the accounts of the time the Conjocta or Conquichity Creek, which it was necessary to cross in order to march on either Black Rock or Buffalo. The Americans had broken the bridge and entrenched themselves behind timber on the Black Rock side. Tucker found himself unable to ford the stream, his men became unsteady and fell into confusion, and here crossed the Niagara river with some thirty casualties, having achieved nothing.

Drummond advances against Fort Erie.

Abortive attempt against Black Rock and Buffalo.

On August 4 Brigadier-General Gaines arrived at Fort Erie and took over the command of the American army from Ripley, Brown being still invalided by his wounds. On the 5th Chauncey's fleet appeared at the mouth of the Niagara river, and intercepted and drove ashore a British brig. Chauncey left three of his vessels to watch four little British ships which were lying in the river, detached by Yeo from his squadron to co-operate with Drummond's army; and with the rest of his squadron he sailed off again down Lake Ontario to blockade Kingston harbour. Drummond's force meanwhile was joined by the Watteville regiment and by the 41st, which was moved up to the front

The siege of Fort Erie.

from the forts, being replaced in garrison by what remained of the 89th with the exception of the light company of that regiment, and Drummond began drawing his lines against Fort Erie. Captain Dobbs, of the Royal Navy, was the senior naval officer of the British vessels which lay off Fort George, and had already won Drummond's confidence by active and willing service. He came up to the scene of action with a party of 70 sailors and marines, the object being to attack three American schooners which were anchored off Fort Erie, and materially contributed to its defence. The gig of Dobbs's own ship, the *Charwell*, was carried by sailors from Queenston to Frenchman's Creek above the falls, and, five other boats having been procured, a further portage was made for eight miles through the woods from Drummond's position to Lake Erie, the Canadian militia undertaking the transport of the boats. Launching them on Lake Erie, Dobbs, on the night of August 12, attacked the three American ships. As in the memorable case when Wolfe's flotilla dropped down the St. Lawrence prior to the ascent of the Heights of Abraham, the British boats were in the darkness taken by the enemy for provision boats. Two of the American vessels were boarded and captured in a few minutes; the third remained untaken, owing to the cables of the attacking boats being cut, with the result that they drifted down stream. Following on this success, Drummond immediately opened fire on the fort from his batteries, and ordered a general assault on the early morning of August 15.

American vessels off the fort taken.

The old British Fort Erie stood just where the Niagara river flows out of Lake Erie, at about 100 yards from the shore. It was a small and weak fort as long as it remained in British hands and, as has been seen, offered little or no resistance to Brown's invading army. The Americans, as soon as they came into possession, set their engineers to work, and constructed far more formidable fortifications. Enlarging and strengthening the original fort they carried earthworks to the water's edge, and by the water they erected a stone building, in which they mounted guns,

Position of Fort Erie and its defences.

calling it the Douglas battery. To the south and in the rear of the main fort they carried earthworks parallel with the water for nearly half a mile, as far as a sandy mound called Snake Hill, which stood where the shore of the open lake turned off the west; and on Snake Hill they placed another battery called Towson's redoubt, after the artillery officer in command, Captain Towson, who had handled his guns with marked ability at Chippawa and Lundy's Lane. This battery, again, was connected with the lake shore by a line of palisades, and ditches and abattis fronted the whole enclosure from one end to the other. Drummond determined on a night attack in three columns at three separate points. It was a dangerous decision, for the defenders probably outnumbered his own men [1], and, as Prevost pointed out to him after the event, in night attacks 'chance and not skill too frequently decide the contest'.

Drummond orders a night attack in three columns.

The right column, which was the main column, was to attack the battery at Snake Hill, breaking into the lines between that battery and the lake, at the extreme south-western end of the fortifications. This column, which was entrusted to Colonel Fisher of the Watteville regiment, included most of that regiment, the 8th, the light companies of the 89th and the 100th, and a few men from the artillery and cavalry, the whole numbering about 1,300 men. The centre, which was led by Colonel Drummond of Keltie, commanding the 104th regiment, consisted of the flank companies of that regiment and of the 41st, with marines, sailors, and a small party of artillerymen. It numbered from 200 to 250 men, and its objective was the old fort. The left column, which was to be directed against the Douglas battery, was commanded by Colonel Hercules Scott, and was composed mainly of his own regiment, the 103rd. The numbers of this column amounted to about 650. Drummond was thus putting into the fighting line about two-thirds of his army, holding in reserve

[1] This seems to have been the case, though in Drummond's order for the attack it is stated that 'the enemy's force does not exceed 1,500 fit for duty'.

the Royals, the Glengarries, and the incorporated militia. The centre and left columns were not to advance until Fisher's men were in action and had, as it was hoped, penetrated the American lines. That column set out in the afternoon of the 14th, and marched through the woods before dark, halting at nightfall at a point in the vicinity of Snake Hill. About two o'clock in the morning they made their attempt. Drummond had advised that, in order to secure secrecy, the flints should be taken out of the firelocks, except in the case of a reserve of steady sol diers, and that the men should rely on the bayonet. They were therefore unable to return the American fire, and were on equal terms only in hand-to-hand fighting. The scaling ladders, too, which they brought with them, proved too short to enable them to mount the works at the battery. 'At half-past two o'clock,' the American General Gaines subsequently reported, 'the right column of the enemy approached, and though enveloped in darkness black as his designs and principles, was distinctly heard on the left and promptly marked by our musketry and artillery.' There was, in short, no surprise. The leading men of the attacking column, men of the light companies of the 8th and Watteville regiments, made their way inside the entrenchments between the Snake Hill battery and the lake, some few by breaking through the palisades, the majority by wading through the water at the end of the lines, but they were not supported, and were compelled to fall back. The main body, attacking under heavy fire, was thrown into confusion, and the Watteville regiment, in precipitate retreat, carried with it the 8th regiment, the company of the 89th being the only men who stood their ground. The firing at this end of the line having being heard by the other columns, they in turn moved forward to attack. The left column, advancing on the Douglas battery, was driven back by very heavy artillery fire, and having lost their leader, Colonel Scott, who was mortally wounded, and a large proportion of their numbers, joined the centre column, which was fiercely attacking the main fort. Three

times this column was repulsed. A fourth attempt proved momentarily successful, and the assailants gained a footing in one of the stone bastions, though at the cost of many lives, including that of Colonel Drummond. The Americans used every effort to dislodge them, but in vain, until a store of ammunition, which was close to the spot, was fired either by accident or of set purpose, resulting in an explosion which literally blew to pieces the bastion and the fighting men who were holding it. This was the end. The remains of the columns were drawn off, and made their way back to the camp, supported by the Royals, whom General Drummond sent out to cover the retreat.

Disastrous failure of the attack and heavy British losses.

It had been a most disastrous night or morning for the British side. Two out of the three commanders of the three columns had been killed, and the casualties amounted to over 900. The 103rd regiment alone lost 370, and was, as an officer of the British army wrote, reduced to a mere skeleton. This same correspondent commented on the loss of prestige by the Watteville regiment, previously held in high estimation. 'It marched,' he wrote, 'with the greatest steadiness and order till within about 300 yards of the point of attack, when suddenly the Dutchmen caught a panic which no exertions of the officers could remove.' Drummond himself attributed the failure of the operation to 'the misconduct of this foreign corps', and desertions from the regiment seem subsequently to have been frequent; but the regiment, which Wellington had sent over from Cadiz in the preceding year [1], seems to have been as good as others, and if in this one night attack it was stampeded, the incident was one which might equally have occurred to British soldiers. The fact that the men were foreigners may well have accounted for their being made scapegoats for the ill-success of the enterprise, and Prevost's verdict can be accepted that 'Too much

[1] Armstrong, the American Secretary of War, wrote to General Wilkinson in September, 1813: 'De Watteville's regiment was made up in Spain, is composed of Poles, Germans, Spaniards, and Portuguese, and completely disaffected.' But this account of the regiment from the enemy's side must be taken *cum grano*.

was required from De Watteville's regiment so situated and deprived, as I am told they were, of their flints'.

In spite of what had happened, Drummond held his ground before Fort Erie, and constructed batteries nearer to the fort than before. His losses were partly made good by the arrival on August 24 of the 82nd regiment, and on September 2 of the 6th, both regiments from the Peninsular army. But he was in pressing need of stores, guns and ammunition, and wrote to Yeo, urging him to bring up his squadron at the earliest possible moment. Yeo, however, remained inactive at Kingston, awaiting the building and equipment of a new ship. Both he and Chauncey naturally determined their movements very largely by the fact whether at any given time they could put on the lake a superior force to the enemy; but there seems to have been ground for the criticism that they were more intent on the chances of naval combat than on the all-important duty of transport for the armies. 'It is by the squadron alone that relief can reach us,' wrote Drummond to Prevost. The high road to Upper Canada was not on land but on the water.

Drummond in want of help from Yeo.

It should be noted that at this stage of the war the British naval forces on the lakes had been removed from the direct control of the Governor-General. In August, 1813, Lord Bathurst had written to Prevost to tell him that arrangements were being made for two parties of 300 seamen in each to reinforce the British marine in Canada, should their services be required; and on the following January 20, 1814, he wrote again that 'it has been determined still farther to extend the scale of naval exertions; and, feeling that to impose upon you the conduct of naval operations so much more extended than heretofore would be to increase unnecessarily the responsibility of your situation, I have thought it expedient with a view to your convenience and to the advantage of the Public service to submit to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty the necessity of taking charge of all the naval establishments on the lakes, and placing the fleets and

dockyards there on a similar footing with H.M.S. fleets and dockyards in other parts of the world'. The Admiralty, he added, agreed in this view and were taking steps to carry it out, with the result, it must be presumed, that Yeo was placed in a more independent position as regards the civil and military authorities than had previously been the case.

There was some skirmishing between outposts of the two armies in the latter part of August and the early days of September, in the course of which Willcocks, the Canadian renegade, was killed; but nothing of importance happened for a month after the fight of August 15. At the beginning of September Brown resumed command of the American force, and wrote urgently for reinforcements to General Izard, who was marching up west from Lake Champlain. Meanwhile he was joined by a large number of militia and volunteers—as before under General Porter's command. The season was wet and unhealthy, and sickness and want of provisions induced Drummond to contemplate raising the siege of Fort Erie and retreating on Chippawa, when on September 17 Brown ordered a sortie from the fort against the British batteries, and a severe fight took place. The batteries were in the middle of the woods, about a mile and a half nearer the fort than the main encampment, and about 500 yards distant from the American lines. They were three in number, and on the day in question were manned by the Watteville regiment and some men of the 8th. Early in the afternoon the Americans attacked in two columns. General Porter led his men round the British right through the woods and, when close to the battery on that side, attacked it in flank and rear, being supported by the second column under Miller, which advanced towards the centre battery, and then wheeling to the left combined with Porter in isolating and overwhelming the battery on that side, and the men who held it. The movement was successful, the battery was taken and the guns destroyed; an adjoining blockhouse was also taken; and the victorious Americans then

Sortie from Fort Erie.

attacked the centre battery, which was also supported by a blockhouse. This position in turn was taken, and an advance was being made against the third remaining battery, when the British reserves came up from the camp, and, driving the whole American force out with the bayonet, followed them up almost to the fort, and re-established the line. The British losses numbered about 600, the Americans also lost heavily, General Ripley being wounded.

Drummond raises the siege and retreats.

Two or three days later Drummond, who had now been joined by the 97th regiment, broke up his encampment, and on the evening of September 21 began to retreat. On the 24th he fixed his head quarters at the Falls of Niagara, but his troops were distributed along the line of the river, from within three miles of Fort Erie to Lake Ontario, the main point of concentration for the advance force being Chippawa, and the course of the Chippawa river and of its tributary, Lyon's Creek, being patrolled and guarded for several miles inland, as a precaution against any cross-country movement by the enemy against the British communications. On October 6 Drummond wrote to Prevost that a large encampment had been sighted on the American side of the Niagara river, in the neighbourhood of Lewiston over against Queenston. This indicated the arrival of General Izard's army, which had come up from Lake Champlain to Sackett's Harbour, and from thence by land and water to the Niagara frontier. Izard's first intention had been to besiege Fort Niagara, which fort, according to Drummond's reports, was not in a condition to hold out against a heavy bombardment, the defences apparently having been sapped by the constant rains. After conferring, however, at Lewiston, with Generals Brown and Porter, Izard determined to postpone attacking the forts until he had tried conclusions with Drummond's army, and his troops were accordingly marched up the river, to be carried across and join Brown's force, Brown handing over the command to Izard. The American army now greatly outnumbered the British, and Drummond called out the whole of the militia of the sur-

General Izard joins Brown and takes over command of the Americans.

rounding country to co-operate in the defence of the lines on the Chippawa river. Fortunately Yeo, having completed his new ship, felt himself strong enough to venture out on the lake, and the difficulties which had existed as to supplying Drummond with provisions were temporarily removed. An appeal from Drummond, however, for the services of some marines who were serving on board Yeo's ships was refused on the ground that a naval engagement might be apprehended.

Having carried his men over the Niagara river near Black Rock on the 10th and 11th of October, Izard encamped two miles above Fort Erie, and on the morning of the 13th he marched down stream with over 6,000 men. On the night of the 14th he encamped a little more than two miles short of the British position at Chippawa. On the 15th he made a reconnaissance and ascertained that the British entrenchments were strongly held: he learnt, too, that Chauncey was again shut up in Sackett's Harbour, and wrote that, if he found himself unable to force and win a general action, he would bring the campaign to a close and distribute his troops in winter quarters. He made, however, one attempt to turn the British right by sending a brigade to Lyon's Creek, where at a place called Cook's Mills, about twelve miles inland from Chippawa, there was, on October 19, a heavy skirmish, in which on the British side the Glengarries did good work. On the day after the fight the American force fell back, and on the 21st, finding that Drummond was not to be moved from his entrenchments at Chippawa, Izard withdrew his whole army up-stream, and encamped opposite Black Rock, preparatory to sending his troops into winter quarters. A little later he came to the conclusion that no advantage was to be gained by holding Fort Erie, his own strength being reduced by sending to Sackett's Harbour General Brown with the regular troops under his immediate command, and by the disbandment of the militia, whereas Drummond's army, supported by Yeo, was likely to grow both actually and relatively stronger.

Izard advances against Drummond.

Skirmish at Cook's Mills.

Izard evacuates Fort Erie and withdraws across the Niagara river.

Accordingly the whole American army was carried back to its own side of the river, and on November 5 the fortifications at Fort Erie were blown up, and the place was left desolate.

Both armies had been hampered by sickness and bad weather, and both generals had played a waiting game, trying to draw the other on in the hope of finding an opportunity to strike a decisive blow, but the opportunity never came. Warned by the losses which he had suffered before Fort Erie, convinced that, as actually happened, the Americans would abandon the fort, Drummond, though urged by Prevost to make another general attack on the fort, and though Yeo's vessels had brought him up reinforcements from the 90th regiment, and relieved him of his sick and ineffective soldiers, refused to run any risk, and the sequel justified his caution. With the abandonment of Fort Erie the war ended on the Niagara frontier, the whole Canadian side of the river being cleared of the invaders who had so long invested it. Drummond himself was in bad health, suffering from an internal injury, and late in October had applied for leave to return to England ; but he retained his command till the fighting was over, a brave and vigilant defender of the Canadian border.

End of the war on the Niagara frontier.

Izard's good treatment of the Canadians.

Izard, during his short term of command, had been conspicuously careful to prevent any wanton outrages on the part of his troops. 'I cause all that we have occasion to take to be paid for,' he wrote to the Secretary of War, 'and spare no pains to protect the wretched people from being plundered.' When his advance corps retreated from Cook's Mills, the mills were left intact, though, as Drummond wrote, the Americans would have been justified in destroying them on public grounds. 'I must do him the justice to acknowledge,' wrote Drummond, 'that, as far as I have observed, he has been studiously cautious in abstaining from his burning and plundering system, probably admonished by the retaliation inflicted at Washington and on the coast.' The conduct of other American leaders had not been equally above reproach. Early in

September, Colonel Talbot, the owner of a settlement on Lake Erie, called after him Port Talbot, reported to the Loyal and Patriotic Society, which had been formed at the end of 1812 for the relief of the sufferers from the war in Upper Canada, that on August 16, 1814, a body of upwards of 100 men, Indians, and Americans disguised as Indians, surprised the settlement and robbed fifty heads of families of their horses, clothing, and furniture. In the middle of September the settlement was again raided, mills burnt, flour destroyed, and sheep killed. In October a plundering expedition on a larger scale took place. On the 22nd of that month some 700 mounted men of Kentucky and Ohio set out from Detroit, under the command of Brigadier-General MacArthur, who had been one of the leading men in Hull's army at the beginning of the war. The object of the expedition, as given in MacArthur's report, was to ensure the safety of Detroit in the coming winter by wasting the resources of the adjoining Canadian territory. With this view, MacArthur aimed at destroying the mills at the head of Lake Ontario and in the vicinity of the Grand river, and he contemplated an attack on Burlington itself. His enterprise, no doubt, was further intended to divert some of Drummond's troops from the Niagara frontier. In order to conceal his movements, he marched up the American side of Lake St. Clair and the St. Clair river. Then crossing that river into Canada, he advanced east by south to the Thames, which he struck at Moraviantown on October 30. Crossing the Thames, he rode still east until he reached the settlement of Oxford, 150 miles from Detroit; and on November 5 he was at Burford, where he learnt that the Canadian militia were collecting at Malcolm's Mills, ten miles distant. The Grand river was now in his front, and it was in flood; he heard, too, that the American army at Fort Erie had abandoned that place and recrossed the Niagara. General de Watteville had been sent down by Drummond to Burlington, and regulars, including the 103rd regiment, were on the march to meet and, if possible,

Other American raids.

Mac-Arthur's inroad.

intercept the invaders. MacArthur accordingly abandoned his intention of attacking Burlington, and after a skirmish with the militia at Malcolm's Mills, in which, according to his own account, he took a large number of prisoners, he retreated south of his outward march by way of the road known as Talbot Street, and along the line of the Thames, reaching Detroit again on November 17. It was a daring raid, conceived in the spirit in which, in the great American Civil War, Sheridan and his horsemen laid waste the Shenandoah valley. MacArthur stated in his report: 'Of private property, no more was destroyed than was absolutely necessary for the support of the troops, for which regular payments or receipts were given'; but he added, 'It is much to be regretted that there were some partial abuses produced by the unfortunate examples presented by the Indians, whose customs in war compel them to plunder after victory.' These 'partial abuses' were represented in stronger light in a general order issued by Prevost on December 1, which spoke of 'the horde of mounted Kentuckians' whose course was 'marked by wanton plunder, devastation, and indiscriminate pillage'. The raid left a sore memory in Canada, but how far MacArthur's proceedings exceeded the rules of legitimate warfare it is not possible to determine from the conflicting accounts.

The Plattsburg expedition.

Before November brought an end to the campaign, and, as it proved, an end to the war in Upper Canada, an expedition had been undertaken in Lower Canada, led by Sir George Prevost himself, which proved a disastrous failure and permanently discredited the military reputation of the Governor-General. He had received instructions from home [1] that, when the reinforcements which were being

[1] In his report of the expedition Prevost acknowledged a dispatch of June 3, which had given him instructions; no copy or draft of this dispatch can be found among the Colonial Office records, but it is quoted in the pamphlet published in defence of Prevost by his family in 1823, entitled *Some Account of the Public Life of the late Lieutenant-General Sir G. Prevost, Bart.*, &c., and also in Christie's *History of Lower Canada*, vol. ii, p. 248, note.

sent reached him, he was to take the offensive against the Americans and attack their territory. On July 12 he reported that the troops were beginning to come in, but that, until complete ascendancy on Lakes Ontario and Champlain had been obtained, he must confine himself to defensive measures, and this he expected would continue until September. On August 5 he wrote that the last two brigades of troops from Bordeaux were approaching Quebec, but that it would be impossible to concentrate the whole force in the neighbourhood of Montreal before the end of the month. The delay, however, he thought, was not a serious matter, as the fleets on the lakes would not be strong enough 'to co-operate with the divisions of the army assembling for the destruction of Sackett's Harbour and the occupation of Plattsburg' before the middle of September. Prevost held the view that the co-operation of an adequate squadron on Lake Ontario or Lake Champlain, as the case might be, was absolutely essential to the success of any forward movement. Without the aid and protection of the fleets, he wrote, 'nothing could be undertaken affording a reasonable hope of substantial advantage.' His extreme caution did not commend itself to the Home government, which had also taken strong exception to his efforts to reopen peace negotiations with the Americans; and in a dispatch dated August 22, which, however, was not received until long after the Plattsburg expedition had ended in failure, Lord Bathurst told him plainly that he was expected to take action in view of the powerful reinforcements which had been sent to him, and in view of the fact that the best way to secure naval ascendancy on the lakes was to attack the enemy's naval establishments. The dispatch ran: 'If you shall allow the present campaign to close without having undertaken offensive measures against the enemy, you will very seriously disappoint the expectations of the Prince Regent and the country.'

Prevost's caution.

Criticized by Lord Bathurst.

Of the 16,000 veterans who were sent from the Peninsular army, two or three regiments were, as has been seen, dispatched to the Niagara frontier to reinforce Drummond.

Kempt's brigade was sent to Kingston, to hold that place and watch Sackett's Harbour. The remainder of the troops were encamped over against Montreal, between the St. Lawrence and the Richelieu, from La Prairie to Chambly. They formed a division of three brigades under the immediate command of General de Rottenburg, and this was the force which, in obedience to orders, Prevost was to lead as an army of invasion into the enemy's country along the line of Lake Champlain. From the dispatch which has been quoted above, the alternatives seem to have been an attack on Sackett's Harbour or an attack on Plattsburg. Throughout August and September Yeo was shut up in Kingston harbour. At the beginning of September Izard, with most of the regular American troops at Plattsburg, began his march to Sackett's Harbour and Niagara. There was therefore in September a better chance of striking a decisive blow at Plattsburg than at Sackett's Harbour, the garrison of which latter place would have been reinforced by Izard's men and supported by Chauncey's fleet, at that time superior in strength to Yeo's squadron [1].

Concentration of the British troops for an advance on the line of Lake Champlain.

Plattsburg stands on the western side of Lake Champlain. Prevost had been anxious not to carry war along the eastern shores of the lake, because on that side was the state of Vermont, well disposed to Great Britain. Through Vermont Canada received, during the war, fresh meat and much of its corn. In one dispatch Prevost wrote that the whole of the cattle for the use of the troops, and very large supplies of specie, came in from Vermont; in another, that two-thirds of the army were, at the time of writing,

[1] That an attempt on Sackett's Harbour at this stage of the war would have been a formidable undertaking is shown by the following extract from a letter from Major-General Sir James Kempt, who was sent to command at Kingston, to Sir G. Prevost, dated September 18, 1814. It is printed as Appendix No. 28 to *Some Account of the Public Life of the late Lieutenant-General Sir G. Prevost, Bart.*, &c.: 'It appears to me that an operation of this magnitude and probable duration should not be undertaken without the most ample means and at the very best season of the year; that not less than 8,000 infantry, with a very efficient corps of artillery and engineers, should be employed on this service . . . and that above all we should have the decided superiority on the Lake before the service is undertaken.'

eating beef supplied by American contractors and drawn principally from the states of Vermont and New York. Along the western shore of Lake Champlain, therefore, was the preferable line of invasion, and Plattsburg was the first objective. The army was the finest and strongest body of men that any British general had hitherto commanded in Canada during the war. They numbered from 10,000 to 11,000 men, most of them seasoned by years of fighting under Wellington. There was some justification for the words with which the American commander opposed to Prevost began his subsequent report of the expedition. 'The Governor-General of the Canadas, Sir George Prevost, having collected all the disposable force in Lower Canada with a view of conquering the country as far as Crown Point and Ticonderago, entered the territories of the United States.' It looked as though the old fighting ground was to be fighting ground again, and the earlier successes of Burgoyne's campaign to be repeated. There was little to stop Prevost's advance. Intent upon ensuring the safety of Sackett's Harbour, the American government had ordered away from Plattsburg under Izard between 3,000 and 4,000 regulars, leaving one of his brigadiers, General Macomb, to command a garrison of convalescents and recruits, the total effective force of regular soldiers not exceeding 1,500 men. They were supplemented, it is true, by hurriedly calling out the New York militia *en masse*; and the result of very leisurely movement on the part of the invaders was to give time for these men, together with volunteers from Vermont, to come up to Plattsburg. In the end, therefore, Macomb appears to have had some 4,000 men to set against the British force [1], while continuous work by day and night had completed and strengthened the American defence works, which stood

Small American force at Plattsburg.

[1] In his general order to the troops after the British retreat Macomb stated that his whole force did not exceed 2,500 men, of whom 1,500 were regulars, but in his dispatch he reported that 700 militia had come in by September 4, and that later militia and volunteers were pouring in. It would seem, therefore, that his irregular troops largely exceeded 1,000.

on high ground on the southern side of the Saranac river, and included three forts and two blockhouses. Yet, even with the advantage of position and of fortifications, it was an impossible task for a mixed body of half-disciplined men to stop the march of a well-equipped veteran force far exceeding them in numbers, if the veterans were properly led. Before the event the case of the Americans must assuredly have seemed desperate.

The American army, before it was broken up, had occupied lines a considerable distance north of Plattsburg and close to the international boundary, at the village of Champlain, which was a little north of the Chazy river. Plattsburg was some twenty-five miles south of the boundary line, on an inlet of Lake Champlain, at the point where the Saranac river runs into the lake. The village apparently lined both banks of the Saranac, for Prevost addressed his official account of the expedition from Plattsburg [1], and reported in it that his troops entered the place on September 6, whereas the American position which those troops were not allowed to attack was on the opposite, the southern side of the stream. A little more than a year ago, as has been told, Colonel Murray, with the naval commanders, Everard and Pring, the latter of whom was still serving with the British flotilla on the Richelieu river and Lake Champlain, had raided the place without opposition, burning the barracks and arsenal, and destroying or carrying off the stores. The chances of successful defence seemed hardly better now.

Prevost advances to Plattsburg.

It was September 1 when Prevost led his force across the boundary line into American territory. On the 3rd he took possession of the former American encampment. Here he left his heavy artillery and part of his force as a reserve. The remainder, numbering about 7,000 men and called in his report the left division, advanced on the 4th to the village of Chazy, and on the 5th to within eight

[1] Though, however, this dispatch was dated Plattsburg, September 11, there is reason to think that it was written in Canada some time afterwards.

miles of Plattsburg. From this point the troops moved forward on the following day in two columns along two separate roads, one by the lake shore, the other more inland. Hitherto there had been no opposition, but Macomb now sent out some troops to harrass and obstruct the advance. The column on the road by the lake was for a short time held in check, the Americans having taken up a strong position behind a stream called Dead Creek, the bridge over which had been broken down ; but the inland column, brushing aside all opposition, marched steadily on, and on that evening the whole force encamped on the northern side of the Saranac river, the Americans having fallen back to their lines on the southern side and broken the bridges[1].

He delays the attack, waiting for the flotilla.

It seems almost incredible that Prevost should not at once have attacked. Every day brought more men to the American side, and every day added strength to their defences. It is true that, in attacking, the British troops might have come under fire from the American squadron, which was lying off Plattsburg ; and it is also true that they would have attacked without their own heavy artillery which, considering the very few miles in all covered by the expedition, might well have been brought up already, but had been left behind. Still it is impossible to believe that the 7,000 picked men who were halted on the north bank of the Saranac, on September 6, would not have made short work of Macomb's force and their entrenchments, if set to the task on the following day ; and no one who reads the history can doubt that, had Brock or Drummond been in Prevost's place, there would have been a tale to tell of prompt movement and success. The course of the war

[1] Macomb's report bears strong evidence to the excellence of the British troops. Of the inland column he writes, 'The militia skirmished with his (the British) advanced parties, and except a few brave men, fell back most precipitately in the greatest disorder. Notwithstanding the British troops did not deign to fire on them except by their flankers and advanced patrols' ; and again, of the whole army, 'so undaunted was the enemy that he never deployed in his whole march, always pressing on in column.'

had shown that Prevost was over-cautious, and co-operation between the two arms of the service, the land and the lake forces, obviously desirable both in principle and in practice, seems to have become with him a superstition. Accordingly he waited face to face with the growing American force and the growing American entrenchments from the 6th to the 11th of September, contenting himself with bringing up his heavy guns and constructing batteries.

The British flotilla.

He had started on the expedition in advance of the fleet on whose co-operation he placed so much store, presumably because he wished to take immediate advantage of the departure of Izard and his troops. Arrived at Plattsburg, and determined not to attack the American position without the aid of the ships, he was naturally anxious for them to be brought up at the earliest possible moment. They consisted of one new vessel, the *Confiance*, which was much larger than the rest and mounted 36 guns, of the brig *Linnet*, of the two sloops which had been taken from the Americans in the previous year and had been twice renamed [1], and of ten or twelve gunboats. The *Confiance* was just off the stocks. On August 27 Prevost reported to Lord Bathurst that she had been launched at the Isle aux Noix, and might be ready to take the lake on September 15, four days after she was actually taken into action. In the same dispatch he added, with characteristic caution, that the Americans had built a similar vessel at Vergennes, thus retaining the naval superiority on Lake Champlain and hampering the advance of the land forces into the state of New York. Captain Downie had been sent down from Lake Ontario by Yeo to take over command of the flotilla from another officer, and did not arrive at Montreal until Prevost was beginning or had already begun his march. The gunboats were sent on in advance of the larger vessels to protect the left flank of the army on its way to Plattsburg, and waited for the rest of the squadron off Chazy. On September 7, the day

Captain Downie in command.

[1] See above, p. 130.

after he reached Plattsburg, Prevost wrote to Downie describing the American flotilla in Plattsburg bay, and adding that, if Downie felt strong enough to meet them, the occasion was favourable for an attack. Downie answered on the same day from the Richelieu river over against Lacolle, that the moment the *Confiance* was ready he would be able to fight, but that she would not be ready for a day or two at least. Further letters passed day by day, Prevost urging in no unreasonable terms the necessity for immediate action, Downie promising to fight as soon as, but not before, his big ship was ready; and it should be remembered by those who study the correspondence that similar pressure was put by Drummond and Prevost on Yeo to make a movement on Lake Ontario in aid of the land forces, and that in Yeo's case, too, there was a disinclination to risk any movement until his new strong vessel was in order. On September 9, being then off Chazy, Downie informed Prevost that he would sail at midnight in order to round the point into Plattsburg bay about dawn, and immediately attack the American squadron, if anchored so as to give a chance of attacking with success. He wrote that he relied on Prevost for any assistance in his power, and he added that his own complement of men on the ships was so short that he had applied for a company of the 39th regiment to make up the number. The movement was delayed, presumably because the equipment of the ships was still incomplete, and on the morning of the 10th, when the attack should have taken place, Prevost wrote to Downie that the troops had been in readiness since six o'clock to storm the American works [1]

Prevost urges Downie to immediate action.

[1] This correspondence will be found printed as Appendix 30 to the pamphlet already mentioned, of which the full title is *Some Account of the Public Life of the late Lieutenant-General Sir George Prevost, Bart., particularly of his services in the Canadas, including a reply to the strictures on his military character contained in an article in the* Quarterly Review *for October*, 1822. London, 1823. It has been very unfairly construed against Prevost, and the last words of Prevost's last letter to Downie, 'I ascribe the disappointment I have experienced to the unfortunate change of wind, and I shall rejoice to learn from you

when the naval action had begun, but that he had been disappointed. On the following morning, however, Downie carried out his plan. 'On the morning of the 11th,' ran Prevost's dispatch, 'our flotilla was seen over the isthmus which joins Cumberland Head with the mainland, steering for Plattsburg bay.'

Plattsburg bay looks east and south-east over Lake Champlain. Its entrance is between the peninsula of Cumberland Head running down to the south-east on the northern side, and, on the southern side, shoals with a small island, known as Crab Island, where the American commodore Macdonough had established his hospital.

The fight in Plattsburg bay.

It was a little before eight o'clock in the morning when Downie's squadron rounded Cumberland Head and, forming line of battle, sailed for the entrance of the bay, Downie leading the van in the half-finished *Confiance*, manned, to quote Captain Pring's report, by 'an unorganized crew' 'totally unknown either to the officers or to each other.' Commodore Macdonough, who commanded the American ships, for some days apprised of Downie's coming, had prepared to receive him. His line was drawn up covering Plattsburg, within and across the entrance of the bay. It was apparently beyond the reach of effective fire from Plattsburg [1], but the southern end of the line was, it would seem, to some extent covered by a small battery on Crab Island. The larger vessels of the squadron were anchored with their bows pointing north. At the northern end of the line was the brig *Eagle*, corresponding to the *Linnet*, next to which was the flag-ship *Saratoga*, answering to but not as large as the *Confiance*. The squadron contained also the schooner *Ticonderoga* and the cutter *Preble*, equivalent to the two sloops on the British side, the *Chubb* and the *Finch*, and there were ten galleys or gunboats. The

that my expectations have been frustrated by no other cause,' have been absurdly taken to be an innuendo against Downie's personal bravery.

[1] This was Prevost's account, and he was corroborated by both American commanders, Macdonough and Macomb. His critics, including Yeo, maintained the contrary.

one flotilla was in fact a counterpart of the other, so nicely balanced were the chances on the water in this war. As Downie advanced, the Americans opened fire, principally on the *Confiance*, and with much effect, the British ships not returning the fire until they were in position. The British commander's object was to bring the *Confiance* to close quarters with the *Saratoga*, in the words of Captain Pring's report, to lay his own ship 'athwart hawse of the enemy's', and most coolly and gallantly he set himself to the task, but a baffling wind and the American gunnery, by which the *Confiance* lost two anchors, made it necessary to take up a position further away and less advantageous than had been proposed. The two ships then proceeded to pound each other to pieces, while the *Linnet* under Captain Pring, who was second in command to Downie, supported by the sloop *Chubb*, attacked the American brig *Eagle*, and the other British sloop, the *Finch*, with most of the gunboats, was directed against the two smaller American vessels and the bulk of the American gunboats at the southern end of the line. The fight lasted for rather over two hours, and almost from the first ill-fortune attended the British squadron. Owing apparently to the misconduct of the officer in charge, the majority of the British gunboats did not come into action at all. Early in the engagement one of the sloops, the *Chubb*, drifted into the American line and was forced to surrender[1]; a little later, the other sloop, the *Finch*, struck on a reef near Crab Island; while the worst misfortune of all was that Captain Downie was killed before the fight was far advanced. The *Linnet* drove the rival American brig, the *Eagle*, out of her place, and the guns of the *Confiance* battered the *Saratoga*; but eventually the latter ship was swung round and opened a new broadside upon the *Confiance*, which was unable to reply, and struck her colours; and the *Linnet*, after pro-

Death of Downie and annihilation of the British squadron.

[1] The Admiralty court-martial on this fight, held on August 28, 1815, found that 'the *Chubb* was not properly carried into action nor anchored so as to do the most effectual service, by which neglect she drifted into the line of the enemy'. Her commander was severely reprimanded.

longing the fight for a short time against the combined American ships, was also compelled to surrender. Commodore Macdonough had won a complete and notable victory, but in the end either squadron was a collection of shattered wrecks, with the exception of the recreant British gunboats, which might at least have attempted to save the helpless vessels on their side by towing them out of action.

Prevost orders an attack on the American entrenchments,

As soon as the naval fight began, Prevost appears to have opened fire from his batteries upon the American entrenchments, and to have ordered his troops to advance. The better part of two brigades, provided with scaling ladders, was sent through the woods to force a ford of the Saranac about three miles above the American position, and then storm the works; a third brigade was to co-operate by crossing lower down, at the bridge in the village, or where the bridge had been, and making a frontal attack. It is not easy to understand from the conflicting accounts what actually happened. The American generals reported that the cannonade lasted all day till the evening, that three attempts were made by the British army at the commencement of the cannonade to pass the river, but that they were driven back, although a considerable body of the troops had actually crossed the stream at the ford. Prevost's own account was that the passage of the Saranac was forced at the ford, and that the troops had reached the heights on which the American works stood, but that by that time the naval combat had been decided in favour of the Americans, and he consequently withdrew the troops on the ground that, without command of the lake, possession of the enemy's fortifications would not have compensated for the loss which would have been entailed in storming them. It is stated that delay was caused through the troops losing the way to the ford, a story difficult to credit, since the ford was but three miles distant, the movement was made in broad daylight, and there had been an interval of several days' inaction, during which it must be supposed that the ground had been reconnoitred. All that is clear is that, before the fight in the

but recalls the troops

bay was over, the American fortifications had not been attacked, and that, though a portion of the British force had crossed the river, they were recalled when the *Confiance* and *Linnet* lowered their colours, and were not allowed to storm the position. That night Prevost fell back, leaving behind him the few wounded who could not be moved and a considerable quantity of stores. The next day he continued his retreat into Canada, losing a large number of men by desertions; and the Plattsburg expedition was at an end.

and retreats.

In a private dispatch to Lord Bathurst, written on September 21, Prevost amplified the reasons for the course which he had adopted. Reiterating what he had so often written, 'that no offensive operations could be carried on within the enemy's territory for the destruction of his naval establishments without naval support,' he wrote that he had relied on the co-operation of Downie's squadron and had made his arrangements to assault the enemy's works directly it should appear. The naval disaster had frustrated his plans, and to attack the fortifications after it had happened would have been most imprudent. Success would not have been worth the sacrifice involved; failure would have resulted in a most difficult and dangerous position; for, he wrote, 'from the state of the roads, each day's delay at Plattsburg rendered my retreat more difficult. The enemy's militia was rising *en masse* around me, desertion increasing, and our supply of provisions scanty.' It would almost seem as though he had Burgoyne and Saratoga in mind, remembering how the loss of boats on the Hudson and the loss of precious time in retreating had involved the loss of the army. Yet he was but twenty-five miles from his own frontier, he had a strong and highly disciplined army against an enemy weak in numbers, weaker still in knowledge of professional warfare; and he had no longer, as when he retreated from Sackett's Harbour, to count as it were every soldier in view of the scantiness of the defenders of Canada. At the same time it is right to record that he had high authority for the

Prevost's defence of his conduct.

The Duke of Wellington approves his action.

course which he took in retreating from Plattsburg. The Duke of Wellington, in sending the Watteville regiment from the Peninsula to Canada, had written in February, 1813, that he trusted Prevost would 'not be induced by any hopes of trifling advantages to depart from a strong defensive system. He may depend upon it that he will not be strong enough, either in men or means, to establish himself in any conquest he might make'; and on December 22, 1814, after the result of the Plattsburg expedition was known, he wrote expressing his high approval of the conduct of the war in North America, and referred to the Plattsburg expedition in the following words: 'Whether Sir George Prevost was right or wrong in his decision at Lake Champlain is more than I can tell, though of this I am certain, he must equally have returned to Kingston [1] after the fleet was beaten, and I am inclined to think he was right. I have told the ministers repeatedly that a naval superiority on the lakes is a *sine quâ non* of success in war on the frontier of Canada, even if our object should be wholly defensive.' Prevost might also, by way of justification, have quoted the words of the dispatch of June 3, which, in instructing him to take the offensive against American territory, bid him guard against whatever 'might commit the safety of the force placed under your command'.

Notwithstanding, for the retreat from Plattsburg and still more for the whole conduct of the expedition, Prevost was and is blamed to the present day. Men remembered that he had in similar fashion drawn off the troops from before Sackett's Harbour; and, undoubted as were his merits as a civil governor; however prudently and watchfully he had maintained the defence of Canada through these trying years, ministering as far as his resources allowed to this point and to that, no success in the field of any kind had been credited to him which his friends could set off against these two mortifying episodes. The naval men not unnaturally found their defence for the overwhelm-

Prevost attacked by the naval officers.

[1] The Duke of Wellington wrote Kingston by mistake for Montreal.

ing of the flotilla and for Downie's death in attacking Prevost. Robertson, the lieutenant of the *Confiance*, who commanded the ship after Downie's death, reported that the crews had been led to expect that the American works would be stormed at the commencement of the naval action, and had been unwilling to continue the fight when the army did not co-operate. Captain Pring, the senior surviving officer of the flotilla, in his official report of the action to Sir James Yeo, referred to the earnest solicitation of Prevost for the co-operation of the squadron, and to the understanding that the works should be stormed by the troops at the same moment that the naval action began. In a separate letter to Yeo, Pring again urged that Downie made his attack on the faith of a promise that the land forces should attack simultaneously ; he wrote that it had been expected by the British sailors that the enemy's gun-boats would be driven from the shelter of the forts when those forts were taken ; and he contended that, if the forts had been stormed, even after the naval action was over, the British flotilla could have been saved. Yeo, in sending on Pring's report to the Admiralty, expressed his opinion that Downie had been urged into action before his ship was fit for fighting. He added that he considered that there was no necessity for the British squadron to have sailed into Plattsburg bay and there fought at a disadvantage; and that, had they been successful, the success would not have assisted the troops in storming the batteries, whereas, had the batteries been first stormed, the American squadron would have been obliged to leave the bay, and the British fleet would have been given a fair chance. A few days later, after Pring had arrived on parole at Kingston and shown him the correspondence between Prevost and Downie, Yeo forwarded that correspondence to the Admiralty in a letter still more strongly worded than the last. He spoke of Downie as having been goaded on to his fate by Prevost, who seemed to have assumed the direction of the naval force ; he repeated once more that it was only on the assurance that the army would attack the enemy's

Yeo's charges against Prevost.

batteries as soon as ever the naval engagement began, that Downie was persuaded to make his attempt; that, had the army attacked, the American squadron must have quitted their anchorage, especially the gunboats that lay close to the shore; and that, had the batteries been stormed even after the termination of the naval action, the British squadron must have been recovered, and the American squadron might have been captured also, for the American vessels were so disabled as to be incapable of taking possession of the *Confiance* and the *Linnet* for fully three hours after the fight was over.

Recall of Prevost to answer Yeo's charges

The government decided that these charges must be communicated to Prevost, and that he should be brought home to answer them. Lord Bathurst wrote to him accordingly on November 26, but the dispatch seems either to have miscarried or not to have been addressed to him direct, for, on the following March 5, Prevost wrote to Bathurst to the effect that he had received through a letter to a junior officer, Sir George Murray,[1] the first intimation of the course which had been taken and of the fact that his commission as Governor had been revoked. The Legislature of Lower Canada was then sitting at Quebec. He closed it in a speech announcing

[1] Prevost's words in his letter to Lord Bathurst of March 5 are—'He (Murray) has communicated to me a letter from your lordship addressed to him, but of which I am the subject'. Major-General Sir George Murray, the distinguished officer who had been the Duke of Wellington's Quartermaster-General in the Peninsula, was sent out at the end of 1811, or early in 1815. He arrived at Quebec on March 2, 1815, by way of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and left for England again on June 10, on hearing of Napoleon's escape from Elba. The notice of him in the *Dictionary of National Biography* says that he was sent out to govern the Canadas; but this is not correct, as it was decided, when Prevost was recalled, that Gordon Drummond should take Prevost's place. Murray went out in a military capacity, being given the local rank of Lieutenant-General. When Drummond took the place of Prevost as Administrator-in-chief, Murray took command of the forces in Upper Canada, and reported to Lord Bathurst on April 25 that, as senior officer of the forces in Upper Canada, he had taken the oaths to administer the government of the province with the title of provisional Lieutenant-Governor.

that he had received the Prince Regent's commands to return to England to repel accusations affecting his military character, which had been preferred by the late naval Commander-in-chief on the lakes in Canada. On April 3 he left Quebec, receiving on the eve of his departure addresses, mainly signed by French Canadians, which showed warm appreciation of his just and conciliatory rule. As the St. Lawrence navigation was not yet open, he took the toilsome overland route to St. John in New Brunswick, and, embarking at St. John, arrived at Portsmouth on May 11. At the end of that month he was told, in answer to an inquiry, that his conduct would be investigated by court-martial at a future date, which could not then be fixed. Meanwhile on August 28 following, the naval court-martial held on Pring, Robertson, and the other surviving officers of Downie's squadron, gave its sentence. These officers were all, except the lieutenant of the *Chubb*, most honourably acquitted; and the court, while of opinion that the British attack would have been more effective, if part of the gunboats had not withdrawn from action, and the winds had not prevented others of the vessels from taking up their appointed stations, found that the disaster 'was principally caused by the British squadron having been urged into battle previous to its being in a proper state to meet the enemy, by the promised co-operation of the land forces not being carried into effect, and by the pressing letters of their commander-in-chief, whereby it appears that he had, on September 10, 1814, only waited for the naval attack to storm the enemy's works; that the signal of the approach on the following day was made by the scaling of the guns, as settled between Captain Downie and Major Coore [1], and the promised co-operation communicated to the other officers and crews of the British squadron before the commencement of the action'. A week later, on September 5, Yeo, having formulated his charges

Finding of the naval court-martial on the Plattsburg disaster.

[1] Major Coore was Prevost's aide-de-camp, and had been sent by him to Downie.

for the purpose of the court-martial on Prevost, sent them in to the Admiralty. They were four in number: that Prevost had induced Downie to attack by leading him to expect the co-operation of the land forces, and had not given that co-operation; that he had not stormed the American works on shore at the same time that the naval action began, as he had given Downie to expect; that he had disregarded the signal for co-operation, which had previously been agreed upon; that he had not made a land attack either during or after the naval action, whereas, if he had done so, the squadron might have been saved. The court-martial was directed to be held in the following January, but the date was subsequently postponed until February 5 on account of Prevost's health. Prevost did not live to be tried, but died a month before the trial should have been held, on January 5, 1816. He was only forty-eight years of age when he died, but his cares and anxieties in Canada must have told upon his strength, which was said to have been further undermined by the fatigues of his last journey from Quebec to New Brunswick. The blow of being summoned home to answer charges against his military reputation was aggravated by the long and somewhat unfair delays in holding the inquiry, against which after arrival in England he vainly protested: and he had to leave to his widow and family the task of trying to do justice to his memory. They spared no pains to do so. The brother of the dead man asked that the inquiry might still be held; and, when the legal authorities decided that such a course could not properly be taken, the widow petitioned for some mark of Royal favour, in order to obliterate the charges which she was not given an opportunity of disproving, and to exhibit her husband's 'unspotted fame, a good soldier's best possession and most valuable legacy'[1]. Eventually, in 1817, an addition was made by Royal Grant to the family arms, and in the inscription on the monument which Lady Prevost erected

Death of Prevost.

Efforts to re-establish his reputation.

[1] See Mr. Brymner's report on Canadian Archives for 1896, pp xxvi-xxviii.

to her husband in Winchester cathedral, it is recounted that 'His Royal Highness, the Prince Regent, to evince in an especial manner the sense he entertained of his distinguished conduct and services, during a long period of constant active employment in stations of great trust, both military and civil, was pleased to ordain, as a lasting memorial of His Majesty's Royal favour, that the names of the countries, where his courage and abilities had been most signally displayed, the West Indies and Canada, should be inscribed on the banners of the supporters granted to be borne by his family and descendants'.

His character and success.

Sir George Prevost did good work for England in difficult and dangerous times; and he did good work for Canada in that, amid the throes of national crisis, he held the confidence of the French Canadians. His instructions, his temperament, and the exigencies of the situation made him cautious to a fault. To defend rather than to invade, and not to attack unless the fleet could support the army, were, in the special circumstances of time and place, excellent principles for general guidance. But Prevost applied them in season and out of season, until he lost the power of initiative. As a leader in the field he was wanting in nerve; he had none of that instinct which grips the occasion, strikes quick and hard, and extorts success. Outside the battle-field his merits were not few nor small, and he deserves to be remembered for good as well as for the Plattsburg expedition.

British expedition to the coast of Maine.

Contemporaneously with that expedition a much more effective and a completely successful invasion of American territory took place in the old Acadian borderland on the coast of Maine. It was organized and carried out in the latter part of August and the beginning of September by Lieutenant-General Sir John Cope Sherbrooke, Governor of Nova Scotia. It had been preceded by taking possession in July of Moose Island, in Passamaquoddy bay. This island, the ownership of which was finally confirmed[1] to

Moose Island taken.

[1] By the award of the Commissioners appointed under the 4th article of the Treaty of Ghent. The award was dated November 24, 1817.

the United States in 1817, was described, in Colonel Pilkington's report to Sir John Sherbrooke, as about four miles in length and two in breadth, in a high state of cultivation, with an estimated population of 1,500, and a militia numbering 250. The island is now connected by a bridge with the mainland. The principal settlement upon it in 1814, as now, was Eastport upon its south-eastern side, and a fort named Fort Sullivan commanded the entrance to the anchorage. Pilkington, with a detachment of artillery, left Halifax on July 5 and on the evening of the 7th met at Shelburne, on the south-west coast of Nova Scotia, H.M.S. *Ramillies*, under Sir Thomas Hardy, with two transports carrying the 102nd regiment. Early on the 8th the expedition sailed, and on the afternoon of the 11th the ships anchored off Eastport. The American officer in charge of the fort was summoned to surrender. When he refused, the boats already full of troops pulled for land; but, before they reached the shore, the American colours on the fort were lowered, and the garrison surrendered as prisoners of war. Possession was taken of the fort with the guns and stores, and the adjoining islands in the bay were also occupied.

Sir John Sherbrooke's expedition was directed against the mainland coast between the New Brunswick frontier and the Penobscot river. He sailed from Halifax on August 26, with ten transports, carrying the better part of 2,000 men, and escorted by a squadron of four ships of war under Rear-Admiral Griffith, which were joined by five other ships on the 31st [1]. From one of these later arrivals it was ascertained that the *Adams*, an American frigate, was in the Penobscot river, and Sherbrooke and Griffith accordingly determined to make straight for the mouth of that river, instead of first taking possession of Machias, which lies higher up the coast towards New Brunswick. They arrived off the Penobscot at day-light on the following morning, September 1. The

Sherbrooke sails for the Penobscot.

[1] Sir John Sherbrooke's dispatch gives the 30th, but Admiral Griffith's, which is more explicit, gives the 31st.

Adams, on August 17, had in the midst of a fog struck on a rock on the coast of Maine, near the estuary of the Penobscot, and, having been with great difficulty floated again at high tide, had been brought by her commander into the Penobscot, and, for greater safety as well as for repairs, had been taken up as far as Hampden, a village which stood on the western bank of the river, twenty-seven miles above Castine. Castine, called after the Baron St. Castin of Acadian story, was and is near the mouth of the river on its eastern bank, the fort standing on a peninsula. It was summoned to surrender, the summons was rejected, and a few shots were fired; but almost immediately afterwards the fort was evacuated and blown up, and the British troops occupied Castine without opposition. The next step to be taken was to capture or destroy the *Adams*; and with this object in view, Sherbrooke sent on the same day a regiment to hold a place named Belfast, which was slightly higher up stream than Castine on the opposite bank, and through which ran the high road from Hampden to Boston. Having secured this point, the general and admiral, working in close harmony, sent a strong detachment of 600 picked men on board two or three of Griffith's lighter vessels up the river to Hampden. Like their superior officers, the colonel in command of the troops, Colonel John, and the captain in charge of the ships, Captain Barrie, worked together admirably. They started at six o'clock in the evening on the same 1st of September; and by nightfall on the following day, after a little outpost skirmishing, the troops were landed and encamped within three miles of Hampden. At daybreak on the 3rd the artillery was landed, and an advance was made on Hampden, gunboats moving up the river in line with the soldiers on shore, thus keeping their right secure, while the ships followed in reserve a little behind. It was a foggy morning, and the American position could not be reconnoitred until the skirmishers were actually engaged. It was then found that the Americans were drawn up in line in front of and covering

and takes Castine.

Successful expedition sent up the Penobscot.

Hampden, their left resting on a high hill, the guns on which commanded both the road and the river; their right, also on high ground, outflanking the British line, with guns posted so as to command a bridge over which the attacking force would be obliged to advance. Behind this position, a little higher up the river, the *Adams* lay off a wharf, on which some more guns had been placed commanding the river, narrow at this point and running between high, well-wooded banks. Notwithstanding the strength of the position there was little fighting. The American right, furthest removed from the river, was first carried; and soon the Americans fell back at all points before the regulars charging on land and the gunboats firing on the river. They set fire to the *Adams*, effectually destroying her, abandoned the guns, and retreated to a place called Bangor, a little higher up than Hampden, on the same side of the river. The British forces followed on land and water, and at Bangor there was an unconditional surrender, the militia becoming civilians again, and the officer in command taking his parole. On that same evening John and Barrie wrote from Bangor reporting their success, but meanwhile Sherbrooke, anxious for news and wishing to be within reach in the event of any reverse, marched on the early morning of the 4th with 700 men to Buckston, eighteen miles above Castine, and on the same side, the eastern side of the river. Here he learnt that all had gone well above; and, the object of the enterprise having been fully attained, he returned to Castine, where the Hampden expedition, with captured guns and ships, rejoined him on the morning of the 9th.

On the same morning Sherbrooke and Griffith sent Colonel Pilkington and Captain Hyde Parker on another joint expedition, to take possession of Machias. On the evening of the 10th the troops landed within a few miles of the place, and marching through the night appeared at daybreak on the 11th in the rear of the fort, called Fort O'Brien, which commanded the river. The fort was evacuated as the British troops advanced, and, with the

Machias occupied,

settlement of Machias which it guarded, was immediately occupied by Pilkington. He prepared to push on inland to clear the surrounding country, as the banks of the Penobscot had been cleared, but received a letter from the commanding officers of the county of Washington [1], as the border district of which Machias was the chief settlement was called, whereby they agreed on behalf of their militia that no arms should be borne in the district against the British government for the rest of the war, provided that that government protected the inhabitants in their private property and their usual occupations. The civilians offered the same undertaking as the military men. It was accepted, and Pilkington congratulated Sherbrooke on the importance of the new territory which had thus been added to the dominion of the King, writing that 'it embraces about 100 miles of seacoast and includes that intermediate tract of country which separates the province of New Brunswick from Lower Canada'. It was not merely the county of Washington that for the time being became a British possession. Castine was garrisoned and held until the end of the war, and on September 21 Sherbrooke and Griffith issued a proclamation at Halifax for the provisional government of 'all the Eastern side of the Penobscot river and all the country lying between the same river and the boundary line of the Province of New Brunswick, including Long Island and all the other islands near and contiguous to the shores thereof' [2]. It would have conduced to the peace and well-being both of the British Empire and of the United States, if this acquisition by Great Britain had been permanently recognized in the peace which was already being negotiated. A boundary line far more equitable and far more in accordance with the dictates of history and geography than the existing frontier would have been established, and all the dangerous inter-

Annexation by Sherbrooke of the territory between the Penobscot and New Brunswick.

[1] The county of Washington was in the district of Maine, which at this time was part of the state of Massachusetts. Maine was admitted as a separate state of the Union on March 3, 1820.

[2] See *State Papers*, vol. I, pt. II, p. 1369.

national ill-feeling which subsequently gathered round the Maine boundary question would have been avoided.

Sherbrooke and Griffith had not found serious difficulties to contend with in their enterprise, but what work they had to do they did thoroughly well, and the promptness with which each step was followed up, together with the absolute harmony between soldiers and sailors, stands out in marked contrast to the unsatisfactory record of the Plattsburg expedition. Meanwhile soldiers and sailors were also co-operating in invasion of American territory further down the Atlantic coast of the United States. On the ocean and in neutral waters, in isolated combats such as have already been noticed, the Americans more than held their own. At the end of March, 1814, the British frigate *Phœbe* and sloop *Cherub*, under the command of Captain Hillyar, overpowered and captured the American frigate *Essex* off Valparaiso. The *Essex*, commanded by Captain David Porter, had made a memorable cruise. Putting to sea at the end of October, 1812, early in 1813 she had gone round Cape Horn into the Pacific, and had there captured a number of British whalers, before she was forced to succumb to superior strength. At the end of April, 1814, the British brig *Epervier*, on her way home from Jamaica, was taken by the American sloop *Peacock*. At the end of June, the American sloop *Wasp* encountered the British sloop *Reindeer* in the English Channel. After a desperate fight the *Reindeer*, in the words of the American commander, 'literally cut to pieces in a line with her ports,' surrendered and, as soon as her crew had been taken on board the *Wasp*, was burnt. The *Wasp* then put into the French port of L'Orient to refit, and, coming out again, on the night of September 1, sank another British ship, the brig *Avon*. The sea-fights went on into 1815, after peace had been signed. On January 15, 1815, the *President*, one of the large American frigates which proved so formidable during the war, was taken by a British squadron which was cruising off New York harbour. On February 20, another of these frigates,

Naval encounters on the high seas.

NEWPORT
CONNECTICUT
LONG ISLAND SOUND
LONG ISLAND
PENNSYLVANIA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
St GEORGES BANK
SCALE
Towns Roads & Distances
TRENTON
Bristol
PHILADELPHIA
MAP
of the
AMERICAN COAST,
from
DELAWEN BAY to NARRAGANSET BAY,
BY
JOHN MELISH
Published as the Act directs and Published by J. MELISH Philadelphia

the *Constitution*, took two British ships, the *Cyane* and *Levant*, not far from Madeira. On March 23, off the island of Tristan da Cunha, the American sloop *Hornet* fought and captured the British brig *Penguin*, which was sunk after the action; and finally, on June 30, in the Straits of Sunda, the East India Company's cruiser *Nautilus* was fired upon and compelled to strike her colours to the American sloop *Peacock*, although the British commander informed his antagonist that peace had been ratified. But daring and skilful as were the American sailors, harrying British vessels from the English Channel to the Straits of Sunda, Valparaiso, and Tristan da Cunha, the American marine was far too weak to protect the shores of the United States, which, now that Great Britain was set free from the incubus of war with Napoleon, were exposed to organized invasion by forces adequate for the purpose.

The war on the Atlantic coast of the United States.

The campaign of 1814–1815 on the American coast-line, including the battle of Bladensburg, the taking of Washington, and the British defeat at New Orleans, was of vital importance to Canada, as relieving the pressure which had been brought to bear upon her for two years past, and as hastening the end of the war by carrying it into the invaders' country. As in 1813, the shores and inlets of Chesapeake bay were visited and harried by British ships. In order to protect the settlements to some extent, a flotilla of gunboats was improvised by the Americans and placed under the command of a brave Irishman, Barney. Coming down from Baltimore towards the mouth of the bay these boats were, at the beginning of June, 1814, driven into the Patuxent river by the British warship *Dragon*, under the command of Captain Barrie, who subsequently, as has been told, was in charge of the successful expedition up the Penobscot. Barney's boats ran into St. Leonard's Creek, a tributary of the Patuxent, and were there blockaded by two frigates lying at the mouth of the creek, while Barrie in turn took his gunboats up the Patuxent, scouring the banks as far as Lower Marlborough, about twenty-eight miles from Washington. Eventually a combined attack

Barney's flotilla in Chesapeake bay.

by Barney's boats and a battery on shore dislodged the frigates, and Barney, gaining access to the main stream of the Patuxent, took his flotilla high up the river. This was towards the end of June. Barney was unmolested until August 22, when Admiral Cockburn came up the river with the boats and tenders of the British fleet, strongly manned with sailors and marines, to make an end of the American flotilla. On rounding a point called Pig Point, with a village upon it, which was on the eastern bank of the river over against Upper Marlborough on the opposite side, Cockburn sighted Barney's boats in the reach of the river above the point; but they were all already abandoned and in process of being blown up. Sixteen were destroyed in this way, the seventeenth, together with some merchant vessels which the flotilla was protecting, fell into British hands. Meanwhile Barney and his men had joined the force which was collecting for the defence of Washington.

The expedition against Washington.

Cockburn reported that, as he moved up the Patuxent river from Benedict, where he had parted with his senior officer, Sir Alexander Cochrane, his boats were kept as nearly as possible abreast with General Ross's army, which was advancing up the western bank. In accordance with the decision of the British government to supplement the forces which they were sending to Canada, by dispatching a brigade to co-operate with Cochrane and Cockburn on the Atlantic coast of the United States, Major-General Robert Ross set sail from the Gironde with three regiments of the line and a company of artillery on June 1. He reached Bermuda on July 24, and there his force was augmented by a fourth regiment of infantry and a strong battalion of marines, bringing up the number of men to about 4,500 in all, organized in three brigades. At Bermuda he met Admiral Cochrane, and on board his flagship, the *Tonnant*, sailed in advance of the troops for Chesapeake bay, where, on August 14, off the mouth of the Potomac river, he joined Rear-Admiral Cockburn, who had in the meantime been hunting out the creeks

General Robert Ross.

of that river. Three days later the transports arrived from Bermuda. Ross who was forty-eight years of age at this time, was a soldier of tried distinction and of high personal character. He had seen service in Holland and Egypt, at the battle of Maida, at Corunna, at Vittoria, in the battles of the Pyrenees, at the Nivelle and Orthes, having been badly wounded in the last-named fight. He had served under the foremost British captains of his time, including Abercromby, Moore, and Wellington. As a regimental officer he had commanded the 20th regiment, and after Vittoria he had been made a Major-General. A gallant soldier, he seems also to have been a most lovable man. After his death before Baltimore, an address was moved and carried unanimously in the House of Commons on November 14, 1814, to erect a monument to his memory in St. Paul's Cathedral [1], and two members of the House, who had known him personally, testified that 'he possessed the happy talent of conciliating by his disposition and instructing by his example', and that 'there never lived a man who deserved more or who had received more of the confidence and affection of those who served under

[1] The inscription upon the monument, which is over the door leading to the crypt, is as follows: 'Erected at the public expense to the memory of Major-General Robert Ross, who, having undertaken and executed an enterprise against the city of Washington, Capital of the United States of America, which was crowned with complete success, was killed shortly afterwards, while directing a successful attack upon a superior force, near the city of Baltimore, on the 12th day of September, 1814.' A good judge of war and of generals, Sir Harry Smith, who went out with Ross as brigade-major and acted as deputy adjutant-general at Bladensburg, and in the advance on and retirement from Washington, while doing full justice to Ross's gallantry and nobility of character, seems not to have formed a high opinion of the generalship which he displayed. He criticized in his autobiography the battle of Bladensburg, the retreat from Washington, and the subsequent attempt on Baltimore (when he was not present himself). He wrote that Ross 'was very cautious in responsibility—awfully so, and lacked that dashing enterprise so essential to carry a place by a coup de main'. At the same time his criticisms in detail were rather directed against the want of the opposite qualities, and he summed up that Ross 'in the continuance of command would have become a general of great ability'. [*Autobiography of Sir Harry Smith*, 1901, vol. i, chap. xx.]

him'. His mission was, in the words of Vansittart, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was the spokesman of the Government on this occasion, 'to retaliate upon the Americans for the outrages which they had committed on the frontiers,' and with this object in view he and his troops came to the rendezvous in Chesapeake bay.

An attack on Washington had no doubt been contemplated, should opportunity arise; but, from Ross's own dispatch, written after the event, it appears that the first object of his advance up the Patuxent river was to co-operate with Cockburn in destroying Barney's flotilla. Immediately after the troops arrived, the fleet moved into the mouth of the Patuxent, and here, on August 18, Admiral Cochrane addressed a letter to Monroe, the American Secretary of State, informing him that, having been called upon by the Governor-General of the Canadas to retaliate against the inhabitants of the United States 'for the wanton destruction committed by their army in Upper Canada, it has become imperiously my duty, conformably with the nature of the Governor-General's application, to issue to the naval force under my command an order to destroy and lay waste such towns and districts upon the coast as may be found assailable'. This notice, the wholesale terms of which were with reason subjected to subsequent criticism, had been called forth by more than one appeal from the Governor-General. Prevost had written in June after the raiding of Port Dover, and in July after the burning of St. David's, and had referred to the conduct of the Americans in these and similar cases, 'as calling loudly for a severe retribution which I trust, when opportunities offer, you will not fail to inflict.' Prevost's character, and the policy which he had pursued throughout the war of neglecting no occasion to conciliate rather than to provoke the enemies of Canada, lent strength to his protests, and the British leaders had now both the force and the opportunity, rightly or wrongly, to exact retribution.

Admiral Cochrane's letter to Monroe.

The city of Washington lies in the forks of the Potomac,

which river flows with a curving south-easterly course into Chesapeake bay. Parallel to the Potomac, and to the east of that river, the Patuxent, 'serpentine and wooded,' as it is described in Sir Harry Smith's autobiography, runs into the bay. Up this latter stream it was determined to operate, the immediate object being, as already stated, the destruction of Barney's boats, but Washington being also more easily assailable from this side than by the direct route up the Potomac, because a cross-country march from the east of no great distance would bring the invaders on to the eastern branch of the Potomac, some miles above Washington, where the stream was small and narrow and, if the bridges were broken, could be crossed without much difficulty. Accordingly, while some ships of the squadron were sent up the Potomac to attack or threaten the forts on that river below Washington, the main expedition made for Benedict, a settlement on the western shore of the Patuxent, about fifty miles south-east of Washington. There the troops were disembarked, and, parting with Cochrane, Ross led his men, in poor condition after their long voyage for a march in the heat of August, up the western bank of the river, while Cockburn accompanied him on the river in the boats belonging to the squadron. Starting on the 20th, Ross reached a place called Nottingham on the 21st, and on the 22nd encamped at Upper Marlborough, situated on a tributary or western branch of the Patuxent, about four miles from the main river and about sixteen miles due east of Washington. An American force, commanded by General Winder, who earlier in the war had been taken prisoner at Stoney Creek, was in evidence during the march, but fell back towards, and covering, Washington. On the 23rd Cockburn, at whose suggestion the attack on Washington was made, having seen the last of Barney's boats, joined Ross with sailors and marines; and on that evening the combined force, moving due west, encamped about five miles out from Upper Marlborough, in the direction of Washington. Early on the 24th, Ross continued his march, taking the

Ross advances on Washington from the side of the Patuxent

and reaches Bladensburg.

road to the north-west instead of due west towards Washington, and at noon reached Bladensburg, a village on the eastern bank of the eastern branch of the Potomac, twelve miles distant from the British encampment of the night before, and about five miles north-east of Washington.

The battle of Bladensburg.

At Bladensburg various roads converged. One of them, a road running north-east and south-west, connected Baltimore and Washington. It crossed the river in front of Bladensburg by a bridge which was standing intact to keep open communication with Baltimore: for, with the exception of a detachment which was stationed at Bladensburg, the Americans concentrated at Washington itself, where the bridges over the eastern branch of the Potomac had been broken, expecting a direct attack in that quarter by Ross's army, and did not move up to Bladensburg until they were assured that he was marching on that place. The road, after crossing the bridge, ran up high ground opposite Bladensburg, and a little further on was carried over a ravine. On the high ground between the ravine and the river, and also on the further side of the ravine, the Americans, under the eye of President Madison and his ministers, were drawn up in two lines, mainly to the north of the road, on which their right rested, and which was fully commanded by some of their artillery thrown forward in advance, and by a house which was fortified for the occasion. Ross estimated their numbers at 8,000 to 9,000 men with 300 or 400 cavalry; Cockburn at 8,000 men. General Winder, in his report, did not place the total higher than 5,000, but the numbers seem to have been from 6,500 to 7,000 men, most of them raw militia hastily collected and not placed in position until the enemy was in sight. The most valuable part of the force, as the event proved, were Barney's seamen, who manned the guns and steadily held their ground, while the infantry, who should have supported them, broke and fled. Ross attacked at one o'clock in the day with 1,500 men in two brigades, not waiting for the rest of his troops to come up. They crossed the bridge as best they could, and the left,

The American position and numbers.

Ross's attack.

which was the light brigade, under Colonel Thornton, made a direct attack along the road, carrying the house and pressing back the enemy on to the high ground behind the ravine. Here the American artillery held their own, Thornton attempting to outflank the position, until the right column, under Colonel Brooke, having broken and driven in the American left, came up in support of their comrades, and the whole American line was swept away. Barney having fought his guns, ten of which were taken, until all the infantry supports had disappeared, was compelled to retire, and, being wounded, was taken prisoner. On the British side Colonel Thornton was badly wounded and had to be left behind at Bladensburg when the British troops retired from Washington. The fight only lasted for about an hour, and no military science was called into play. Ross accurately gauged the position, and with a small body of trained though tired men rushed it, rocket-fire supplementing the bayonet. The British losses were rather under 300, larger than would have been the case had time been taken to march round instead of making a frontal attack ; but time was of the essence of the enterprise; it was a bold and somewhat hazardous dash in the heart of the enemy's country.

Defeat of the Americans.

After a short rest the general moved on towards Washington, and reached the city about eight o'clock in the evening, by which time it was dark. Going on into the outskirts of the town in advance of their troops, Ross and Cockburn were fired on from the Capitol and two adjoining houses. The troops were then brought up and the houses and Capitol were taken and burnt; the President's house was also burnt, and all the various public buildings. The Americans themselves, as the British troops entered Washington, set fire to the navy yard and two ships lying off it. The burning of the stores and arsenal in this quarter was completed by Cockburn's seamen on the following day, the 25th. 'In short, sir,' ran Cockburn's report to Cochrane, 'I do not believe a vestige of public property, or a store of any kind, which could be converted to the use of the govern-

Ross occupies Washington.

The public buildings burnt.

ment, escaped destruction.' At the same time, by the admission of the Americans themselves, the troops were kept carefully in hand, private property was rigorously respected, and such looting as took place was the work of town loafers, always ready on occasions of this kind to make free with their neighbours' property. On that same night, the night of the 25th, Ross evacuated Washington and began his retreat through Bladensburg, where he left the badly wounded of his force. The Americans, purposely led to believe that he would march on Baltimore, left him to return unmolested to Upper Marlborough, which place he reached on the evening of the 26th. On the evening of the 29th he arrived at Benedict, from which point he had started, and the army was re-embarked on the following day.

Ross retreats.

At the time that Ross was retreating from Washington, the ships which had been sent up the Potomac and which were commanded by Captain Gordon, attacked and took the fort against which they had been directed, Fort Washington, on the eastern bank of the river, about fourteen miles below Washington itself. Passing on up the river, Gordon held up to ransom the town of Alexandria, on the opposite bank of the river, and six or seven miles nearer the capital. Some ships and stores were delivered up and carried off or destroyed, and, in spite of efforts which were made to intercept him on his return down the river, Gordon reached the bay again in safety in the early days of September. Less successful was a similar diversion which was made at the same time on the opposite side of the Patuxent, by sending a frigate up Chesapeake bay itself, above Baltimore. This ship, the *Menelaus*, was commanded by Sir Peter Parker, new, it would seem, to the work. Landing on the night of August 30 with a detachment to attack a small force of American militia encamped in the woods, Parker was ambushed and lost his life, while his men, after suffering somewhat heavily, made their way back to their ship.

British successes on the Potomac,

and reverse in Chesapeake bay.

Sir Harry Smith who was sent home by Ross with the

EAST END
of
LAKE ONTARIO
and
RIVER ST. LAWRENCE
From
KINGSTON to FRENCH MILLS
Reduced from an Original Drawing
((in the))
NAVAL DEPARTMENT
By John Ulah

No. 16. Figures on the Rivers denote the depth of Water in fathoms

Miles

MAP
of the
Seat of War
in
NORTH AMERICA
JAMES'S BAY
LABRADOR
COAST
RIVER ST LAURENCE
GULPH or ST LAURENCE
LAKE SUPERIOR
LAKE HURON
LAKE MICHIGAN
LAKE ONTARIO
LAKE ERIE
MICHIGAN TER.
UPPER CANADA
LOWER CANADA
NEW BRUNSWICK
NOVA SCOTIA
NEW YORK
MASSACHUSETTS
PENNSYLVANIA
VIRGINIA
ATLANTIC
ST GEORGES BANK
SABLE I.
PHILADELPHIA
WASHINGTON

dispatches reporting the fight at Bladensburg and the capture of Washington, and who returned to take part in the New Orleans expedition, tells us in his autobiography that he had strongly dissuaded Ross against an attempt on Baltimore, which the latter was urged by the admirals to make; that Ross had promised not to make it, but that he was overpersuaded or overruled, and, says Smith, 'lost his gallant life from not following the dictates of his own good sense and ability.'[1] Smith's arguments, among others, were that the Americans would be concentrated at Baltimore, and that the water approaches to Baltimore would be obstructed. Both these arguments proved to be founded on fact. According to Sir Alexander Cochrane's official report, as the approaching equinoctial gales rendered it unsafe for the fleet to leave Chesapeake bay immediately after the return of the troops from Washington, he and Ross resolved to make a demonstration against Baltimore, 'which might be converted into a real attack should circumstances appear to justify it.' The squadron therefore sailed up the bay and anchored on September 11 off the mouth of the Patapsco River, which is the water-way to Baltimore harbour. The lighter vessels entered the river and landed the troops on its eastern bank a little higher up than North Point, which is the end of the peninsula, along which, on this side of the river, was the land route to Baltimore, that city being only thirteen miles distant from the place where the troops were disembarked. The landing took place on the early morning of the 12th, and the force, over 3,000 in number, including a brigade of seamen and a number of marines, and accompanied as before by Admiral Cockburn, dislodged the Americans from entrenchments which they were throwing up across the neck of the peninsula three miles further on. Continuing their march for about two miles, the advance guard of the army, with whom were Ross and Cockburn, became engaged with American skirmishers in closely wooded country, and Ross, riding back to bring up

Ross advances on Baltimore.

[1] *Autobiography of Sir Harry Smith*, 1901, vol. i, p. 221.

Death of Ross.

supports, was mortally wounded. Colonel Brooke now took command, and pushed the Americans back to a point within five miles of Baltimore, where the Americans, according to Brooke about 6,000 in number, but probably not exceeding 4,500, were drawn up in a strong position, under cover of a wood, and lining a paling which crossed the main road. Brooke lost no time in making dispositions for attack. It was in the main a frontal attack, but, on the British right, the 4th regiment of the line made a détour and broke in, before the movement was discovered, upon the American left, stampeding a regiment directly opposed to them and throwing the whole line into confusion. After less than fifteen minutes' fighting according to Brooke's account, after one hour and twenty minutes according to the American general's report, the field was carried, and the Americans were broken and dispersed, leaving all their wounded and two guns behind them. Brooke encamped that night on the scene of the fight, and at daybreak on the next morning, the 13th, advanced to within one and a half or two miles of Baltimore on its eastern side. Here he reconnoitred the defences of the city and prepared for a night attack. Meanwhile, however, Cochrane, who had been moving up the river with his light vessels, found the mouth of the harbour barred by sunken ships, guarded within by gunboats, and flanked on either shore by batteries and fortifications. Naval co-operation was therefore impossible, and rather than incur the risk of a land attack unsupported by the ships, Brooke drew off his men very early on the morning of the 14th for about three miles to the spot where the fight had taken place, and, after a halt of some hours, retreated for another three miles and a half, and encamped for the night. By his leisurely retreat he invited a forward movement on the part of the Americans, but they made no serious attempt at pursuit, and on the 15th the troops were marched back to the point where they had landed and replaced on board the ships. Brooke reported that he carried off 200 prisoners, 'being persons of the best families in the city,'

Defeat of the Americans.

The attack on Baltimore given up and the British troops withdrawn to the ships.

but the expedition had not been a success. A considerable amount of damage had been caused, a greater amount of apprehension had been aroused, but Baltimore had not been taken, and the loss of Ross was irreparable. This enterprise concluded the serious operations in Chesapeake bay. Cochrane sailed off to Halifax, Cockburn to Bermuda, preparations being in hand for the invasion of the Southern states. Rear-Admiral Malcolm waited for a while with the troop-ships and looked into the Potomac. In the middle of October he too went off with the troops to Jamaica, which had been appointed as a rendezvous; and Captain Barrie, the able commander of the *Dragon*, newly arrived from the Penobscot expedition, took charge in Chesapeake bay until late in December, when he was ordered south, leaving two or three ships behind to be in evidence in the bay.

Conclusion of the operations in Chesapeake bay.

The capture of Washington was the central point in these operations. The burning of the public buildings, much criticized at the time and ever since, requires a brief notice in this book because it has a direct bearing upon the colonial history of Great Britain. That the action of the British government and their agents in the matter should be condemned by the Americans was only natural. When Monroe wrote to Cochrane that 'we must go back to distant and barbarous ages to find a parallel for the acts of which I complain'; when President Madison issued a proclamation declaring that the proceedings exhibited 'a deliberate disregard of the principles of humanity and the rules of civilized warfare'; they were using language dictated alike by the bitterness and resentment which the proceedings called forth, and by the necessities of State policy. Equally, when Mr. Whitbread, on the following 8th of November, in the Debate on the Address in the British House of Commons, denounced what had been done as 'a transaction so discordant to every example of the civilized world, so abhorrent to every principle of legitimate warfare, so inconsistent with the free and generous nation whose officers were the perpetrators of it, and so

Comments on the burning of the public buildings at Washington.

detested and abhorred by all who respected the character of their country and the civil rights of the world'; when he exclaimed that 'we had done what the Goths refused to do at Rome'; he was using the language of those members of a Parliamentary Opposition who can find nothing too bad to say of their own country so long as it is governed by their political opponents. But when we read in Sir Harry Smith's autobiography[1] that 'fresh from the Duke's humane warfare in the south of France we were horrified at the order to burn the elegant Houses of Parliament and the President's house'; when he writes of burning the 'Capitol and other buildings with the ruthless firebrand of the Red Savages of the woods'; or again, when a modern British historian gives as his verdict that 'few more shameful acts are recorded in our history, and it was the more shameful in that it was done under strict orders from the government at home'[2]; it is worth while to try to make the transaction intelligible, whether it should be condemned or whether it should not.

The burning of the public buildings at Washington was no wanton outrage. It was done deliberately under definite instructions, as an act of retaliation or retribution, and it was accompanied by rigid regard on the part of the army of occupation for the rights of private property. Was it a justifiable act? and if so, was it in any sense politic or expedient? The British government held that there had been a series of excesses in Canada on the part of the Americans, for which retribution ought to be exacted. To this Mr. Whitbread's rejoinder was that 'No atrocity on the part of our enemies could justify this country in retaliating by the commission of similar crimes'; while Monroe contended in his letter to Sir Alexander Cochrane that there had been outrages on the British side and that, if any actions had been committed by the American army which were not justified by the necessities of war, the American government had disavowed them

[1] Vol. i, pp. 200–201.

[2] Green's *Short History of the English People*, chap. x, sect. 4.

and the officers immediately responsible for them had in some cases been punished. It is noteworthy, however, that Monroe, while specifying the burning of Newark and St. David's, and while referring to the armed occupation of capitals on the continent of Europe, made no reference to the destruction of the public buildings at York. Yet, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer pointed out in reply to Mr. Whitbread, here the Americans 'had destroyed a capital, for be it remembered that York was the capital of Upper Canada. Although a small town it was a capital, and, among other public and private buildings, the House of Assembly and the house of the governor had been burnt to the ground'. The burning of the public buildings at Washington was therefore a direct reprisal in kind. The village of Newark, it must be remembered, had also in its turn been once the seat of the Legislature of Upper Canada; its burning had been difficult or impossible to justify as a military necessity; and though the proceeding had been disavowed by the American government, it was not the last act of the kind during the war. There seems therefore, primâ facie, to have been good excuse or justification for the deliberate action taken at Washington, and the arguments to the contrary must rest on the evidence as to how far the prior acts of the Americans had been either provoked by outrages on the British side or already adequately punished by British reprisals, and also on an estimate as to the greater vandalism implied in burning the larger town and richer buildings.

Assuming, however, that the destruction of Washington can be justified, it does not follow that it was politic and expedient. At first sight it would seem to have been a singularly unwise act. Then, as now, England with her world-wide interests could least among peoples afford to offend or appear to offend against the conscience or the susceptibilities of civilized nations. Moreover, at the time when Washington was occupied and the buildings were burnt, peace negotiations were being actively carried on, and the destruction of the capital of one of the contending

parties by the other can hardly have been considered likely to conduce to reconciliation. Most of all, the strength of England in this war consisted largely in the division of opinion in the United States, and if there was one act more than another which was likely to heal the differences, and to rally the Northern states to the side of the war, it might have been supposed that the destruction of the Federal capital would have that effect. But there is more to be said for the policy of this high-handed action of the British government than at first appears. Sir Harry Smith suggests that the complete destruction of Washington had been contemplated with a view to the removal of the capital further north, among the states more friendly to England. This suggestion can be passed by; and no great stress need be laid on the statement made by Goulburn, one of the British negotiators of the Treaty of Ghent, that it was the capture of Washington which enabled the British representatives to carry through one of the debatable articles of the treaty—the provision for the protection of the Indians; nor again, on the statement made by Lord Liverpool, that the English gained more credit among the Americans by their respect for private property at Washington than they lost by the destruction of the public works and buildings. The real ground upon which both the expediency and the justice of the action can be defended is to be found elsewhere. We must go back again to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's words, and his reminder of the burning of York. 'Be it remembered that York was the capital of Upper Canada. Although a small town it was a capital.' It was not in England itself that the acts had been committed for which the burning of the public buildings at Washington was avowedly a reprisal. It was in a British colony, and that colony one of the youngest of all, settled by men who had already suffered for loyalty to Great Britain. It was their settlements which had been burnt, it was their little capital whose buildings had been destroyed. In exacting retribution in kind the British government were not paying off a score of their own,

MISSISSIPPI TERRITORY
LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN
LAKE BORGNE
LAKE MAUREPAS
MOBILE BAY
Pensacola
MAP
of
NEW ORLEANS
AND
ADJACENT COUNTRY
by
John Walsh
1815
The figures in the Water denote the Depth in feet

except so far as they identified themselves with their colonists ; they were illustrating in practical and emphatic fashion that for every injury done to her colonies reprisal would be meted out in full measure by the mother-country. The colonial history of Great Britain records that the rights and wrongs of the colonies have not always been fully weighed, when war and peace with some foreign nation have been in the balance. This at any rate was one instance to the contrary. York might be a tiny capital, the British settlers in Upper Canada might be few in number, it might be expedient to be generous and forbearing in dealings with the United States, in order to cultivate their good graces for the time to come ; but, whether the burning of the Washington buildings was right or wrong, whether it was politic or whether it was not, Lord Liverpool's government, in taking the responsibility for it, consciously or unconsciously, acted on a sound, wholesome, and not ungenerous instinct that the wrongs of the colonies should be requited upon the wrongdoers not less but more than if they had been directly inflicted upon the motherland herself.

The New Orleans expedition.

Andrew Jackson.

Operations in Florida.

The last episode in the war of 1812 was a British expedition against the Southern states. Here the invaders were confronted by the best leader who came to the front on the American side during the war, Andrew Jackson. Florida at the time belonged to Spain, but its neutrality was indifferently respected on either side. From the time when the Americans had bought Louisiana from Spain there had been a boundary dispute between the two Powers. It was claimed by the Americans that Louisiana included on the east all or part of West Florida ; and eventually, in 1812, they appropriated the debatable territory as far east as the Perdido river, annexing the district between the Pearl river and the Perdido, including Mobile bay, to Mississippi territory. In the following year, 1813, General Wilkinson, then commanding at New Orleans, established a military post at Fort Bowyer on the eastern side of the entrance to Mobile bay. Pensacola

in West Florida, just beyond the Perdido river, was still held by Spain; and here, in 1814, the English put in an appearance, apparently as friends and allies of Spain, for on August 29, 1814, a British officer, Major Nicholls by name, issued from that place an outrageous manifesto against the American government addressed to the northern and western inhabitants of the United States. In this document Nicholls described himself as at the head of a large body of Indians commanded by British officers and supported by a British and Spanish squadron. There were four small British ships at the time lying off Pensacola; and about a fortnight later, on September 15, these vessels, carrying Nicholls with some marines and Indians, appeared before Fort Bowyer and made an attempt on the fort. The attack was a complete failure, and one of the ships was lost. In turn Jackson, who had taken Wilkinson's place, came up to Mobile, collected a force and marched on Pensacola. He appeared before the place on the evening of November 6, and on the following day, after a show of fighting, occupied the town. Nicholls, who was holding a fort called the Barancas, some miles below Pensacola and nearer the sea, blew it up and retreated with such force as he had under his command; and Jackson, having thus cleared West Florida of his enemies, returned to defend New Orleans.

Abortive British attempt on Fort Bowyer.

The British troops and ships destined to attack that place had for the most part gathered at Jamaica. Sir Alexander Cochrane, as before, commanded the ships. Sir Edward Pakenham, brother-in-law of the Duke of Wellington, a distinguished Peninsular officer, was appointed to command the army in succession to General Ross, but did not reach the scene of action before New Orleans until the initial operations were over. On December 8 Cochrane, in his flagship the *Tonnant*, anchored off the Chandeleur islands between the mouths of the Mississippi and Mobile bay, south and east of the shortest water-way to New Orleans. That water-way, too shallow then as now for sea-going ships, is by Lake Borgne and Lake

Pontchartrain, which with the connecting channels run nearly east and west, forming an acute angle with the course of the Mississippi below New Orleans. New Orleans lies between Lake Pontchartrain on the north and the Mississippi on the south, for the Mississippi here runs in a curving course from west to east, very roughly parallel to the lakes. About seven miles in a direct line across country below the city, though far more by the course of the winding stream, the river turns to the south-east to flow direct into the Gulf of Mexico; and some little distance above this turn, following the left or eastern bank of the river, is the scene of the battle of New Orleans. The British commanders decided to attempt a landing within measurable distance of the city by the way of Lake Borgne; and, in order to effect this object, it was necessary to gain command of that lake and its approaches by first disposing of a small flotilla of American gunboats which was on guard. The *Tonnant* and the heavier vessels of the British squadron were, as already stated, anchored off the Chandeleur islands, the lighter ships were anchored further north near the entrance to Lake Borgne, among the islets which line the mainland coast from Mobile bay to that lake. From this latter anchorage, on the night of December 12, over forty boats, formed in three divisions, and carrying upwards of 1,000 sailors and marines, started to try conclusions with the American gunboats. The latter, five in number, retreated up the lake, intending to gain, if hard pressed, the shelter of a small fort called Petite Coquille, which had been constructed on the channel from Lake Pontchartrain into Lake Borgne, known as the Rigolets. Want of wind and a strong ebb tide prevented them from reaching the upper end of the lake; and, after rowing for thirty-six hours, the British boats came up with them on the morning of the 14th, anchored in line off the Isles aux Malheureux, about half-way up the lake [1]. Having previously intercepted an

Position of New Orleans.

The American flotilla on Lake Borgne captured.

[1] This is the account given by the commander of the American gunboats in his subsequent report; he says that the gunboats were moored

American sloop which was endeavouring to join her friends; the British boats, rowing against a strong current and under heavy fire, at length came to close quarters about noon. There was a short but sharp fight, the Americans defending themselves bravely and inflicting a loss on their enemies of at least 100 men in killed and wounded; but numbers prevailed, the American commodore's vessel was boarded and overpowered, and, her guns being turned upon her consorts, the whole little flotilla was captured.

The British troops land at the head of the Bienvenu creek, and gain the road to New Orleans by the eastern bank of the Mississippi.

Lake Borgne being thus cleared, Cochrane and General Keane, who commanded the land forces in Pakenham's absence, made arrangements for landing the troops. Between the 16th and the 22nd the greater part of the force was carried to the head of Lake Borgne, and temporarily disembarked at the Isle aux Poix, a swampy islet at the mouth of the Pearl river, which runs into the Rigolets. It was decided not to attempt to force the passage of the Rigolets and proceed by Lake Pontchartrain, but to transport the army across Lake Borgne and up the Bayou Catalan or Bienvenu, a creek which runs into the lake at its upper end, and on its southern side—the side towards the Mississippi. The head of the creek, which had been duly reconnoitred, was within a mile and a half of the high road to New Orleans, which ran along the left or eastern bank of the Mississippi within a mile of that river, the city of New Orleans by the road being at this point six to seven miles distant. This road was to be gained as a necessary preliminary to a further advance. On the morning of the 22nd, the troops were embarked at the mouth of the Pearl river, the advance guard, consisting of rather over 1,600 men, being placed in boats, and the second division, numbering about 2,400 men, in vessels as large as could be brought into the lake. The latter all, or nearly all, grounded in succession on the way across the lake, before they were

' in the west end of Malheureux island's passage '. The commander of the British boats says that they were anchored off St. Joseph's Island, which is much nearer the entrance to Lake Borgne from the sea. General Jackson, on the other hand, reported that the gunboats were lost ' near the Pass of the Rigolets ', i. e. at the upper end of the lake.

within ten miles of the mouth of the creek; and the advance guard pushed on alone and at midnight reached the mouth of the creek, where an American picket was surprised and cut off. The boats moved up the creek, and the men were landed at its head at daybreak on the 23rd. This advance corps, with which were General Keane and Rear-Admiral Malcolm, was the light brigade, commanded by Colonel Thornton, the gallant officer who had led them at Bladensburg, where he had been badly wounded. In two hours' time after they were landed, the engineers opened a track towards the Mississippi through what General Keane describes in his dispatch as 'several fields of reeds, intersected by deep muddy ditches, bordered by a low swampy wood'. It was a belt of marsh land, largely overgrown with cypress wood. Advancing by this line, Thornton and his men gained the high road, intercepting and capturing a company of American militia which was posted at a plantation adjoining the road, and took up a position between the road and the river, the right resting on the road, the left upon the river.

Jackson attacks, but is beaten off.

After the many hours' row across the lake, followed by the march through the swamp, the troops rested, while the boats which had brought them went back to fetch the remainder of the force from the grounded vessels. Meanwhile, Jackson at New Orleans, about two o'clock in the day, had heard of what had taken place, and wisely determined to strike at once. Collecting, according to his account, about 1,500 men, but apparently a rather larger number, and supported by an armed schooner, the *Carolina*, which with two gunboats dropped down the Mississippi and anchored abreast of the British position, he neared the encampment about seven o'clock in the evening, and made his dispositions to attack. At eight o'clock the British troops, most of them sleeping off their fatigue, found themselves under a hot fire from the schooner. They took what cover they could, and were forthwith attacked by Jackson. A fog came on. According to the American general's report, it saved the British force from being annihilated. According

to General Keane [1] it enabled the Americans to decoy one or more of the British regiments into their midst, with the result that there was at one time a confused mêlée of hand-to-hand fighting. The Americans made, it would seem, several attacks, more especially against the British right flank which, until supports came up, was in danger of being turned, and against the centre. Eventually, about midnight, Jackson drew off his men, and early on the next morning took up a position nearer to New Orleans. Keane also moved forward for a short distance. The Americans had been repulsed, but had inflicted a considerable loss upon Keane's small army, for the British killed, wounded, and missing amounted to 277 out of a force which at the end of the fighting seems to have numbered in all a little over 2,000 men. The American casualties were returned at 213. Two days later, on Christmas day, Sir Edward Pakenham arrived and took over the command from Keane, the British force now numbering 5,000 men.

Sir E. Pakenham arrives and takes command of the British forces.

On the 27th Pakenham's guns succeeded, by firing hot shot, in destroying the *Carolina*, but another armed ship, which served the Americans on the Mississippi, made good her escape, and continued to molest the British encampment. Early on the 28th Pakenham made a reconnaissance in force against Jackson's position, but effected nothing. Heavier guns were brought up, batteries were constructed in advance of the British position, so far as it was possible to construct such works upon a morass, and on January 1 the artillery opened fire upon Jackson's lines, the troops being formed in two columns to attack in the event of the gun-fire proving effectual. It was all to no purpose. The guns were overpowered by Jackson's artillery and by a battery which the American commodore had erected on the other side of the river, here hardly 800 yards wide. The troops were accordingly brought back into their encampment, and when night came on the guns

[1] From General Keane's dispatch he seems himself not to have been on the spot in the earlier stages of the fight, but to have taken command later in the engagement.

were also withdrawn. The difficulties of the situation for the attacking force became painfully apparent. Jackson must be driven from his position if New Orleans was to be reached ; but that position was well nigh impregnable and every day added to its strength.

General Lambert and reinforcements arrive.

Sir John Lambert had for some time been expected with a fresh brigade, and on January 6 he arrived with two fine regiments of the line. Pakenham then proceeded to put into execution a plan which he had formed for dislodging Jackson—the only possible plan under the circumstances. It was to combine a frontal night attack upon the main American position with an attack upon the batteries on the opposite bank of the river. Could those batteries be taken, the guns which mauled the British troops in flank whenever they moved forward, could be used against Jackson and his men, and in turn make their lines untenable. It will be remembered that the English had no hold on the Mississippi. Some small ships from Cochrane's squadron had been sent round to the mouth of the river, to make their way up stream as far as possible, and thereby create a diversion ; but they were not in evidence until January 9, after the fighting was over, and then they were still in the lower reaches of the river, where they bombarded a fort named Fort St. Philip at the Plaquemine bend, about forty miles from the sea. The bombardment went on until January 17 without producing any effect, and then the vessels were withdrawn. Pakenham found himself under the necessity of bringing the boats, which had transported the troops over Lake Borgne, to the Mississippi, in order to ferry the force intended to attack the batteries on the right bank across the river. The channel of the Mississippi was at a higher level than Lake Borgne and its creeks or bayous ; and, when the river was full, if its banks were cut, the water flowed into small canals or large ditches which had been carried by the plantation owners across the intervening land, and were used, among other purposes, for saw mills. One of these canals ran from the head of the Bienvenu

Pakenham's plan of action—to attack simultaneously on both sides of the Mississippi.

creek towards the river just behind the British encampment, and along the line by which the troops had come. This canal was cleared and deepened, and extended right up to the bank of the river; and, the boats having been dragged into it, the canal was dammed behind them, so as to make a lock which would be filled when the river bank was cut, thereby enabling the boats to go out into the Mississippi. The bank was to be cut, and the boats were to carry the troops detailed for the purpose over the river on the night of the 7th; and, before day broke on the 8th, there was to be a simultaneous attack on the American positions on both banks. Pakenham had under his command, all told, between 8,000 and 9,000 men. Of these, 6,000 formed the force destined to attack Jackson's lines on the left bank of the Mississippi. They were disposed in three columns, under Colonel Rennie, General Keane, and General Gibbs, to attack the extreme right on the river bank, the right centre, and the left of the enemy, while General Lambert's brigade was held in reserve.[1] The main attack was to be made by Gibbs and his men on the American left, and the whole movement was to be supported by artillery moved up during the night and posted within 800 yards of the American lines. To Colonel Thornton was entrusted the charge of attacking the batteries on the right bank, and about 1,500 men, it would seem, had been placed for the purpose under his command. The success of the difficult combined movement depended upon the two attacks being made simultaneously, and before the clear light of day exposed the troops, as they advanced over the bare flat, to the combined fire of the enemy.

Disposition of the British troops.

Nature and considerable military skill had united to make Jackson's position one of the greatest strength for defence purposes. He had chosen a spot where the space

Strength of Jackson's position.

[1] This is the disposition of the troops given in Sir Harry Smith's autobiography. General Lambert's dispatch does not mention Colonel Renny's, or Rennie's column, as it was part of the brigade under General Keane's command.

between the river and the cypress swamp was contracted to 1,000 yards. Here he had formed his lines. He had thrown up earthworks both in front of and behind one of the canals already mentioned, this particular canal having been previously disused, but now for the purpose in hand cleared and filled again with water by cutting the river bank. Far into the swamp he had carried his defences; there was no possibility of turning his line in this direction. The river protected his other flank, and not only the river but the batteries upon the further side, which completely enfiladed the position. On his own side of the river guns were disposed along the whole line of the entrenchments. Nor was this all. Had he been forced back from the ground which he had thus chosen and fortified, he had thrown up two other lines of defences in his rear, one a mile and a half, the other over two miles nearer the city. Clearly he meant to fight every inch of the ground—a skilled soldier and a brave, stubborn man. Strong again was the position on the right bank, but not so strong as were Jackson's own lines. Here nearly all the guns were concentrated on the edge of the river and directed against the enemy on the other side of the Mississippi, leaving the inland line of defences on the right bank inadequately provided with artillery. This end of the line, moreover, was hardly carried up to the wood and swamp which, as on the other bank, flanked the position; and therefore there was a possibility of the assailants turning the line at this point—the point furthest removed from the river. Jackson had in the last few days received reinforcements of over 2,000 men from Kentucky; but they were raw levies, ill equipped and badly armed. Even with this addition his total forces seem hardly to have exceeded 6,000 men[1], of whom between 1,500 and 2,000 were eventually detached to defend the right bank; but the Ameri-

[1] The American numbers are difficult to make out with any accuracy. Sir Harry Smith spoke of them as vastly superior to those of the British troops, but this seems clearly to have been an exaggeration.

can army had a good commander, and an admirable position; and before the attack was delivered they were apprised of what was coming.

Delay in the crossing to the right bank of the river.

Pakenham had doubted whether the dam which his engineers had constructed was of sufficient strength to hold the water, and his doubts were justified. When the bank of the Mississippi was cut, after nightfall on the 7th, the water pouring in broke the dam, and some time was spent in repairing it. Meanwhile the river was falling, and the supply of water became inadequate. Precious hours were thus lost; and, after some of the boats had been at length dragged into the river and filled with troops, the strong current prolonged the crossing, so that day had broken before a part only of Thornton's men were landed on the other side. They numbered 600. Thornton, seeing that the main attack on the left bank had already begun, led his force on at once, two or three armed boats keeping pace with him on the river. Driving in an advanced picket, he reconnoitred the American position at a distance of 700 yards, recognized its weak point, and sent a detachment to turn its right. Here some of the newly arrived Kentuckians were posted; and though, as the English advanced, the American guns on the river bank, which had hitherto been directing their fire on Pakenham's army, were turned round to check Thornton and his men, the American right on this side made no stand, but broke and fled. Thornton then ordered a general attack with his whole small force and took the position, though in doing so he himself was disabled by wounds. This part of the movement had been a complete success, but it was all to no purpose. The surprise had failed, the combination had failed, and the main British army had been cut to pieces.

Thornton carries the American position on the right bank.

Complete failure of the main attack on the left bank, with heavy loss

Pakenham had held his troops in hand till the day was breaking; then, fearing to lose what little cover the morning mists might give, he ordered the whole line forward. Ladders and fascines had been prepared for crossing the ditch; the 44th regiment was to bring them up, but by

some neglect or misunderstanding they were left behind, and were fetched too late. The advancing columns, while still more than 200 yards from the American entrenchments, were clearly exposed to view; and then from behind the ditch and earthworks there came what Sir Harry Smith, the man of many fights, has described as 'the most murderous and destructive fire of all arms ever poured upon column'. To encourage his men, who began to falter, Pakenham galloped up to the head of the columns, and was killed. General Gibbs was mortally wounded, and died next day. General Keane was badly wounded; Colonel Rennie was killed. Many of the soldiers reached the works, and scrambled into the ditch, to be shot down, drowned, wounded, or taken prisoners. Two companies of the 21st regiment and many of the riflemen gained a footing within the entrenchments, but, unsupported and overpowered, were compelled to surrender. All was confusion and useless bloodshed, until Lambert, bringing up the reserve, did what could be done to steady and re-form the broken throng of retreating men, and held his ground at a little distance from the scene of the attack, until the situation could be rightly judged. It was still not ten o'clock in the morning. About that time, hearing of Thornton's success, he sent the commanding artillery officer across the river to report whether the captured position could be held, and that officer gave as his opinion that it could be held with security only by 2,000 men. Lambert accordingly decided to abandon it, and on the same day, under cover of fog, brought back Thornton's troops to the left bank of the river, just as the Americans on the right bank, whom Jackson had reinforced, were preparing to make an effort to regain what they had lost. On that night, the night of the 8th, all that remained of the army was replaced in its old encampment. On the following day, Lambert decided to abandon any farther attempt on New Orleans, but kept his ground until the night of the 18th, when the troops were brought back to the lower end of the Bienvenu creek; and unmolested by the enemy,

to the British army.

Death of Sir E. Pakenham.

Lambert brings back Thornton's troops from the right bank of the river,

and abandons the expedition.

between the 27th and the 30th, they were all, with the exception of a few too badly wounded to be moved, re-embarked.

In this disastrous engagement the British casualties were fully 2,000, the American losses were trifling [1]. To some small extent the fight recalls Abercromby's headlong and hopeless attempt to dislodge Montcalm from Fort Ticonderoga in 1758. A nearer parallel is found in our own day in the battle of Magersfontein. It was said that in the attack some of the British troops were found wanting, but Jackson bore witness to the firmness of the advance and the determination with which the attack was pressed. Taken as a whole, the British infantry did all that men could do, but were asked to do more than human nature could carry through. The delay in the attack and the want of support from the opposite bank, made the attempt impossible. Lambert's subsequent withdrawal of Thornton's men from the position which they had gained was criticized, and the criticism received some support from the testimony which Jackson bore to the importance of the position. In his report of the day's proceedings to the American Secretary of War, after mentioning the re-crossing of the British troops who had taken and occupied the American lines on the right bank, he added : 'I need not tell you with how much eagerness I immediately re-gained possession of the position he had thus happily quitted.' Yet there can be little doubt that Lambert showed sound judgment in bringing back these men, and equally sound judgment in abandoning the whole expedition, for there was not one position only to be carried, not one more fight only to be won, before the British army could reach New Orleans. We may well take Sir Harry Smith's verdict that the plan of the expedition was faulty from the beginning, and that the army should never have been placed in the position in which it was when Paken-

Review of the battle and of the plan of the expedition.

[1] The American returns of the fight as printed in books on the war are confusing. Apparently they lost on this particular day sixty or seventy men.

ham took up the command, seeing that the Americans, not the English, had command of the Mississippi. We may take the same good authority, too, for the view that when Keane had taken up his ground by the Mississippi and beaten off Jackson, he should without loss of time, and in spite of risks, have advanced at once before his enemies had time to develop their defences. When Pakenham came, there was no alternative but either to retreat altogether or to make the attempt which failed so disastrously. He made it with what precautions he could; those precautions miscarried, and with many of the men who followed him he met a soldier's death. But there is another point of view also to be considered, and the clue to it is given in an interview which Sir Harry Smith tells us that he had with Jackson's Adjutant-General after the battle. The American officer had a drawn sword and no scabbard, and the reason he gave was, 'Because I reckon a scabbard of no use so long as one of you Britishers is on our soil. We don't wish to shoot you, but we must if you molest our property. We have thrown away the scabbard.' The Americans had learnt in Canada what was the price of invasion, the English learnt the same lesson before New Orleans. At Bladensburg the men who fought in defence of their capital had no leader worthy the name. New Orleans was defended by a determined soldier, and under his leadership patriotism was a formidable force.

This great disaster to the British cause, great in proportion to the other encounters in this war, and very considerable in itself, was followed by a small success. Intending to operate against Mobile, Lambert and Cochrane decided, as a necessary preliminary, to take Fort Bowyer, the American post at the entrance of Mobile bay, which had, as already told, in the previous September beaten off a small naval attack. On the morning of February 8, a brigade was landed within three miles of the fort, and advancing to within nearly 300 yards of the defences, cooped up the Americans within them. A battering train was landed, lines were pushed forward close to the fort,

Lambert takes Fort Bowyer.

and on the morning of the 11th the guns were in position and ready to open fire. Before firing began, Lambert sent his military secretary, the future Sir Harry Smith, to the fort to demand immediate surrender, and after a short demur terms of capitulation were signed, under which a British guard took possession of the gate of the fort at three o'clock on the same day, and at noon on the following day the American garrison, numbering rather over 360 men, marched out as prisoners of war. General Winchester, commanding at Mobile, had sent a detachment down the bay to try and draw off the besieging force, but they did not arrive in the neighbourhood of the fort until twenty-four hours after the surrender had taken place. The main body of the British army had already been landed on the Isle Dauphin, off the entrance of Mobile bay, and as on February 14, three days after the surrender of Fort Bowyer, news was received that the Treaty of Ghent had been signed, hostilities were suspended, and the troops remained on the island until at the beginning of March they learnt that the Peace had been ratified by the President of the United States, when they were again embarked and sent home. The treaty had been signed on December 24, 1814, more than a fortnight before the battle of New Orleans was fought. It was ratified by President Madison on the following February 18.

Operations on the coast of Georgia.

While these operations were being carried out in the Gulf of Mexico, there had been some trifling warfare on the coast of Georgia. Captain Barrie, under Admiral Cockburn's orders, came down with some ships from Chesapeake bay and reached Cumberland Island, off the southern coast of the state, on January 10. That island was made the rendezvous. On the 13th Barrie took a small fort at Point Petre commanding the entrance to St. Mary's river, the border river between Georgia and Florida, and on the following day sent a force up the river which did some damage. On the 15th Admiral Cockburn arrived, and the force waited at Cumberland Island for troops which were expected to join the expedition under

the command of General Manley Power. Upon their arrival an attempt was to be made on Savannah. These troops never came, having been diverted to reinforce Lambert's command, and nothing was done beyond a second and an abortive little raid up St. Mary's river on February 22, which, with the exception of belated actions on the high seas, was the last act of the war.

End of the war.

CHAPTER IV

The Treaty of Ghent and General Summary

The Treaty of Ghent was the result of prolonged negotiations. As soon as war broke out between Great Britain and the United States, the Emperor of Russia interested himself in endeavouring to restore peace, and in March, 1813, he formally offered to act as an intermediary between the two nations. His offer was accepted by the American government, and in May, 1813, commissioners to act for the United States left that country for St. Petersburg. The British government, on the other hand, refused Russian mediation, for there was no sign that Madison and his advisers were prepared to recede from the position which they had taken up in declaring war, and no doubt many in England shared the view of the Duke of Wellington, who, in a private letter dated May 23, 1813, wrote: 'The object of this offer must be to create a division between us and the Russians[1].' In the following September, however, the British minister at St. Petersburg was instructed to inform the Russian government that Great Britain would be prepared to negotiate directly with the United States—London, or Gottenburg in Sweden, being suggested as a suitable place for the conference; and in November Lord Castlereagh communicated the offer direct to Monroe, the American Secretary of State, assuring him that the British government would earnestly desire to bring the negotiations to a favourable issue 'upon principles of a perfect reciprocity not inconsistent with the established maxims of public law, and with the maritime rights of the British Empire'. The invitation was accepted in January, 1814, by the American government, who chose Gottenburg as the place of meeting, and

Russian offer of mediation refused by Great Britain.

The British government offer to negotiate directly with the United States.

The offer accepted.

[1] *Wellington's Despatches* (Gurwood), 1838 ed., vol. x, p. 395.

expressed in their turn a sincere desire to terminate the war 'on conditions of reciprocity consistent with the rights of both parties as sovereign and independent nations, and calculated not only to establish present harmony, but to provide as far as possible against future collisions which might interrupt it'. Subsequently Ghent was substituted for Gottenburg as the place of meeting, and there, on August 8, 1814, the negotiations began, the American commissioners being now five in number, while Great Britain was represented by three.

The Conference meets at Ghent.

When in the previous year the American government accepted the Russian offer of mediation, and peace envoys were in consequence sent to St. Petersburg, their instructions were to the effect that the principal causes of the war were impressment of American seamen, and illegal blockades, 'as exemplified more particularly in the Orders in Council.' A provision against impressment was to be a *sine quâ non*, and if the American commissioners could not obtain it, they were to break off negotiations and return home: but they were instructed that it would be sufficient if the stipulation was limited to the duration of the existing war with Napoleon, inasmuch as it was presumed that, if Great Britain compromised or abandoned her claims for the time being, she would not again revive them in the event of future wars. The commissioners were also to endeavour to obtain a satisfactory definition of neutral rights, with special reference to blockade; but, seeing that the British Orders in Council had long been repealed, this point was not to be made an indispensable condition of peace. These instructions were given in April, 1813. After another year of war between the two countries, when the British position had been materially improved by the conclusion of the war with Napoleon, and the restoration of peace on the continent of Europe had for the time removed the grounds upon which the Americans had gone to war, the American government still further receded from the position which they had originally taken up. On June 25, 1814, the commissioners were

Original instructions to the American commissioners.

Revised instructions.

empowered from Washington to propose an article relegating the subject of impressment to a future treaty, and two days later—letters from the commissioners having been received at Washington in the meantime—they were authorized to omit any stipulation on the subject of impressment, if such omission was indispensable to obtaining peace. Thus the American plenipotentiaries went into the negotiations at Ghent with powers to ignore all the alleged causes of war.

Points raised by the British commissioners: (i) impressment; (ii) inclusion of the Indians in any treaty to be signed; (iii) revision of the boundary between Canada and the United States; (iv) fishing rights.

The British commissioners at the first conference raised four points. The first was impressment, mentioned on the presumption that the American envoys would wish the question to be brought up, and not as a subject which the British government were anxious to discuss. The second was the inclusion of the Indian allies of Great Britain in any treaty which might be framed, and the settlement of a definite boundary for their territory. A satisfactory arrangement under this head was made a *sine quâ non* on the British side. The third was a revision of the boundary between Canada and the United States. In bringing forward this subject the British commissioners disclaimed any intention to acquire additional territory, their object being to prevent future disputes. The fourth point was raised in the form of an intimation that the privileges hitherto conceded to the United States of fishing in British waters and landing and drying fish on British shores could not be continued without an equivalent being given on the other side.

Points raised by the American commissioners.

The American rejoinder was that they had no instructions to treat on the subject of the Indians or on that of the fisheries, and in their turn they put forward as suitable subjects of discussion, a definition of blockade and of neutral and belligerent rights, and claims of indemnity in certain cases of seizure.

All other points dropped into the background in the course of the negotiations except the two questions of specifically including the Indians in the provisions of peace, and rectifying the boundary between Canada and the United States. The American commissioners, who, like

American negotiators on other occasions both before and since, showed marked ability and astuteness, invited their opponents to define the proposals more closely; and, translating them into claims for limitation of American sovereignty and cession of American soil, fought them hard and with success. It stands to the credit of Great Britain that her government would not make peace on any other terms than that the treaty of peace should include an article safeguarding, or attempting to safeguard, the interests of the Indians who had adhered to the British cause. They did not repeat the fault which the British negotiators of the peace of 1783 had committed, of omitting all mention of the natives in the treaty stipulations, and they were bold enough to assert of Great Britain that 'it is utterly inconsistent with her practice and her principles ever to abandon in her negotiations for peace those who have co-operated with her in war'—an assertion which did not hold good then, and in the light of subsequent history would hardly hold good now. The terms in which they argued the case, coupled with the fact that this one stipulation alone was made indispensable on their side, contrasted favourably with the somewhat contemptuous comments made by the American representatives on a proposal, as they described it, to preserve a perpetual desert for savages. There could be no question as to which government was more sympathetic to the coloured men. In its original form the British contention was that within boundaries to be defined the Indians should retain an independent existence, guaranteed alike by the United States and by Great Britain, forming a kind of buffer state between the United States and Canada; and it was proposed that the American plenipotentiaries should sign a provisional article on that basis. At an early stage the Englishmen expressed their readiness to accept in the main as the boundary of the Indian territory the limits which had been assigned to the Indians by the treaty of Greenville, concluded in 1795 between the American government and the tribes with which they had been at war. Both

The article relating to the Indians.

sides appealed to that treaty. The British commissioners contended that it recognized the territorial rights of the Indians. The Americans contended that, in placing the Indian tribes whose homes were outside Canada under the sole protection of the government of the United States, it vested in that government the sovereignty of the soil. Eventually a compromise was proposed on the British side, by which both parties were to agree upon the ratification of the treaty to restore to the Indian tribes and nations with which they had been at war 'all the possessions, rights and privileges' which they had enjoyed or been entitled to before the war began. An article framed on these lines was presented as an ultimatum and was accepted. The British contention had so far prevailed that the Indians were included in the treaty; but the American commissioners secured the chief point which they had in view, that the treaty should not in terms derogate from the sovereignty which they rightly or wrongly claimed over the Indian tribes living on the American side of the boundary line of 1783.

Proposals for revision of the boundary line.

The revision of that boundary line was the other main subject of discussion. Pressed to specify their claims, the British commissioners put forward three requirements. The first was that, as an alternative to a modification of the existing boundary on the Great Lakes, the United States government should cease to keep any naval force or establishment on those lakes or to maintain any fortified positions on or near their shores, with the result that the control of the lakes for war purposes would remain with Great Britain. It was on the face of it a claim which needed justification, and the British representatives were singularly outspoken in supporting it. They laid down that the war on the part of the United States had not been one of self-defence, but 'a part of a system of conquest and aggrandisement'. Military command of the lakes would give the Americans the means of beginning another war in the heart of Canada, and, as the weaker Power at any given time on the American continent, the

British demand to have command of the lakes for military purposes.

less capable of acting on the offensive, and the more exposed to sudden invasion, Great Britain was justified in demanding military command of the lakes as a necessary security for her possessions in Canada. Had the Americans been successful in the war, the Englishmen argued, it was beyond question that the victors would have demanded the cession to the United States of large parts if not of the whole of Canada. As it was, British troops held posts in United States territory south of the water-line; it was not therefore unreasonable either to treat on the *Uti Possidetis* principle or, in the alternative, to require such security against invasion as would be given by excluding American armaments from the lakes. Such was the British contention, but it was not made, like the stipulation with regard to the Indians, an indispensable condition of peace. The American commissioners could set against Forts Niagara and Michillimackinac, occupied by British garrisons, Amherstburg and the Canadian side of the Detroit river under American control. They refused to treat on the *Uti Possidetis* principle or on any basis which involved cession of American territory, and, except for an article which provided for accurately delimiting the line along the water-way which had been prescribed by the 1783 treaty, the new treaty was silent on this particular issue. Subsequently, however, in April, 1817, a reciprocal arrangement was concluded by which both governments practically agreed to have no armed naval forces on the lakes.

The north-western boundary.

The second British requirement in connexion with the boundary line was that the north-western boundary from Lake Superior to the Mississippi should be adjusted, the British treaty right of free navigation of the Mississippi to be continued. The seventh article of the Peace referred this matter to an international commission, to be supplemented if necessary by arbitration.

The north-eastern boundary.

The third claim put forward was for a revision of the north-eastern boundary in such a way as to secure direct communication between Quebec and Halifax. To this the American commissioners entirely demurred, on the ground

that it would involve a cession of what they held to be American territory; and though, while the negotiations were proceeding, the successful British expedition to Castine had taken place, and all the district east of the Penobscot had come under British control, the claim was in the end not insisted upon, possibly, among other reasons, because the state of Massachusetts was concerned—the state which beyond all others had shown friendly feeling to Great Britain. Article V of the treaty provided that commissioners should be appointed to define the north-eastern boundary from the source of the St. Croix river, and that, if they disagreed, the matter should be referred to arbitration.

General effect of the Treaty.

Taken as a whole, the Treaty of Ghent replaced the contending parties in the position in which they stood at the beginning of the war. It provided for mutual restitution of what had been taken by force of arms. Four articles of the treaty dealt with outstanding difficulties caused by the wording of the Peace of 1783, referring them to joint commissions and, if necessary, to arbitration. They were the ownership of islands in Passamaquoddy bay and the Bay of Fundy, the north-eastern boundary, the boundary along the St. Lawrence and the lakes, and the north-western boundary. These articles were followed by the article which safeguarded the Indians; and one more article enlisted both Powers against the slave trade. It was a peace which settled nothing conclusively, though it gave an opening for settlement of some outstanding points of difference. The rights of fishing in British waters, which the Americans had enjoyed prior to the war, and which the British commissioners had declared to be cancelled by the war, were dealt with in the subsequent Convention of 1818.

Greatly in favour of the Americans.

The treaty was beyond question a triumph for American diplomacy. They had received back far more than they gave; they had successfully withstood nearly all the British claims. Though consenting to a provision on the subject of the Indians, they had eliminated from it nearly all its sting and force; and, unaided by the battle of New

Orleans which was yet to come, they had brought their country unscathed out of a most dangerous position in which it had been placed by a policy which had aimed at conquest and had ended in failure.

General summary of the war.

Among the many wars in which Great Britain has taken part in the course of her history, the war of 1812 has never held a high place. It has been little studied in this country even by the few, and the many are ignorant or oblivious that there ever was such a war; or, if they know of it, know of it only because of the fight between the *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake*, or the battle of New Orleans. The reason is not far to seek. It was a war between kindred peoples, which brought no immediate profit and little credit to either, and which apparently had no result whatever—for the combatants ended as they had begun—beyond increased bitterness between the two sections of the British race. Moreover it was a comparatively small war, waged while Great Britain was in the midst of an incomparably greater struggle; and its incidents were to Englishmen completely overshadowed by the far more glorious record of the Peninsula and Waterloo. The last thing in the world that the British government and the British people desired in the midst of their sore trial and distress was this additional war with the United States of America. They were loath to enter into it. They were glad to be quit of it; and they willingly tried to forget it, not least because, while it lasted, the British navy—Nelson's own navy—had distinctly lost reputation.

The Americans too had little cause to be proud of the war and every reason to be glad that it was ended. Chivalry can hardly be looked for between nations. They make war and peace on business lines, and this was the case with the Americans, or rather with the war party in the United States, in the instance in point. They had grounds, more or less substantial, for declaring war. They expected to gain by it, and, therefore, they went to war. Still the historical fact remains that they forced war upon

the country which had been their own motherland, at the darkest time of her history, when she was fighting to the death for the national liberties which the Americans themselves professed to value so dearly. Had they succeeded, success would have been their apology; but, in spite of the skill and bravery of American sailors, in spite of Andrew Jackson's victory at New Orleans, the war of 1812 was to the Americans little else than a fiasco. Setting out with high hopes and confident expectation of conquest, they ended with relief that their own territory was not less than when they began, and that their nation was still one; and to make peace they passed over in silence all the claims which had been put forward to justify declaring war. An ungenerous policy had conspicuously failed, and the mischief of it was that the sense of failure tended to increase the rancour felt against Great Britain in the minds of those who had advocated and promoted the war.

Neither then to Great Britain nor to the United States was this war of a kind to invite commemoration and remembrance as a grateful national theme. Nor was it illuminated by brilliant strategy on land or water. It did not make great military or naval reputations. It did not give scope for creative statesmanship. When the news of the peace came to the British army off Mobile bay, 'we were all happy enough,' writes Sir Harry Smith, 'for we Peninsular soldiers saw that neither fame nor any military distinction could be acquired in this species of militonautico-guerilla-plundering warfare.'[1] The name of Isaac Brock stands out on the British side as that of a man who, in the very few weeks during which the war coincided with his life, gave signs of military genius and of heroism, while Gordon Drummond and Ross were good soldiers of the second class. On the American side far the best known name is that of Andrew Jackson, but his military reputation rests mainly on his skilful defence of New Orleans, and he cannot be given a place among the great soldiers of history.

[1] Sir Harry Smith's *Autobiography*, vol. i, p. 251.

At first sight the judgment which it seems right to pass upon the war is that it was a pointless, fruitless, mischievous and inglorious episode in the history of the two nations, with hardly any redeeming feature. We are inclined to endorse the words used of it in the *Annual Register* for 1814: 'The unhappy war with the United States of America, an epithet it peculiarly deserves, as having no great object on either side, the attainment of which can in the least compensate its evils.'[1] But the more the subject is studied, the more it will appear that from the point of view of military history the record of the war of 1812 is full of interest and instruction; and that from the point of view of colonial history it was not a barren war, but, on the contrary, one fruitful of issues of vital importance.

In no war were the merits and defects of citizen soldiers more clearly to be seen, or the priceless value in the early stages of such a war of a nucleus of trained men. No other war was so amphibious in character, for in no other part of the world is such water communication to be found as in the land which was the main scene of the fighting. The war of 1812 proved, as the Boer war has again in our own time shown, the extraordinary difficulty of conquering a large territory, even if most sparsely defended; and it proved to demonstration the value of sea power. If in the single ship engagements the English often took the second place, none the less they were masters of the sea, and this one fact alone made the success of the American plan of campaign absolutely impossible.

This last point can better be considered in estimating the place which the war of 1812 holds in colonial history; and the place which the war holds in colonial history can be rightly estimated only if it is carefully borne in mind that on the British side there were two partners concerned, an old country and a young country, Great Britain and Canada. To Great Britain the war was at the moment—though the ultimate issues were far wider—little more than

[1] p. 176, chap. xvi, beginning.

a new burden, an additional danger, involving greater expenditure, loss of property, damage to trade. To Canada it was far more than this. From the first it was a life-and-death struggle, a fight for liberty, for hearth and home, for all that a people small or great holds dear.

The war party in the United States—the anti-English party, to whom the men of Massachusetts were so strongly opposed—had a definite programme, illustrated in speeches and proclamations, and, as the British commissioners at Ghent roundly declared, notorious to the whole world, though not explicitly avowed by the government. That programme was to conquer and to annex Canada. It was intelligible, it was natural, it was in a sense the corollary of the American War of Independence. The out-and-out haters of England and the English, as the traditional oppressors of the old American colonies, wanted to round off what they held to be an unfinished work, and to eliminate the British factor from the mainland of North America. Remembering the help which France had given them in achieving their independence, they were not, as the New Englanders, reluctant to range themselves on the same side as the French in enmity to England, and they bore in mind that the large majority of the Canadians were of French descent, seemingly ill-disposed to the administration of Great Britain. They had not, however, reflected on the want of principle which their policy implied, nor had they counted the cost. Their aim was forcibly to annex Canada to the United States. Their battle-ground was mainly Upper Canada, and Upper Canada was settled by the Loyalists, who had practically been driven out of the United States and had found this new home. In the name of liberty and independence the Americans were making an attempt to deprive men of their liberty, to follow them up in their place of exile. They failed in their object, and one reason for the failure was that their final cause of action was demonstrably bad.

But they failed, too, because they attempted an impossibility. As Sir James Craig had said, Canada was

not conquered as long as Quebec was not taken. Even in the War of Independence Quebec could not be taken ; and at this later date, with larger resources in Canada, and with the growing possibility of sending relief in winter time overland from Halifax, its capture by a people whose sea power was wholly inadequate for the purpose was absolutely hopeless. So events proved. Quebec throughout the war was as safe as if it had been on another continent ; and Montreal, which had been occupied by American troops at the outset of the War of Independence, in the later war, though threatened, was safe as well. Further west the new province, which had lately been called into existence, was attacked and raided at this point and at that, but even this remoter region was not swept by the enemy, and, when the end of the war came, they had hardly any footing upon it.

It was this failure of men who had once been citizens of the British Empire to subdue other British colonists lining their frontier and facing their settlements, that makes this war one of first-rate importance to those who study colonial history. The war was the national war of Canada. It did more than any other event or series of events could have done to reconcile the two rival races within Canada to each other. It was at once the supplement and the corrective of the American War of Independence. It did more than any other event could have done to demonstrate that colonial liberty and colonial patriotism did not leave the British Empire when the United States left it. The same spirit which had inspired and carried to success the American War of Independence was now enlisted on the side of Great Britain, and the successful defence of Canada by regiments from Great Britain and Canadian colonists combined, meant that a new British Empire was coming into being *pari passu* with the growth of a young nation within its limits. The war of 1812 determined that North America should not exclusively belong to the American Republic, that Great Britain should keep her place on the

continent, but that she should keep it through this new community already on the high-road to legislative independence.

The British Empire owes a debt which can never be overestimated to this somewhat depreciated war of 1812. Canada as a whole recognizes in it the war which to all time endorses her status as a nation; but with Upper Canada inevitably the memories of the war are most closely intertwined. After the end of the war, on June 13, 1815, five days before Waterloo, Lord Bathurst wrote a dispatch to Sir Gordon Drummond, conveying the Prince Regent's acknowledgments to Drummond himself and to the army which he commanded in Canada. The dispatch concluded with the following words, as graceful as they were true: 'Nor is His Royal Highness insensible to the merits of the inhabitants of Upper Canada, or to the great assistance which the militia of the province afforded during the whole of the war. His Royal Highness trusts that you will express to them in adequate terms the high sense which he entertains of their services as having mainly contributed to the immediate preservation of the province and its future security.' Kingston, York, Burlington Heights, the banks of the Niagara river and the Thames, the settlements between Hamilton and Niagara, all under new names or under old are associated with the war. Every dwelling-place, every family in the peninsula between Lakes Erie and Ontario and on the Canadian shores of the lakes was scarred with the war. Every incident was burnt into the memories, every good fighting man's name was a household word. For here the Loyalists and their descendants lived: here they fought for their own, and they kept their own; and their witness today, delightful to all who have the good fortune to visit it, is the little capital which was twice taken and raided —the great, bright city of Toronto.

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